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Summary record of the 10th meeting
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President: Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Vice-President) ..... (Belgium)

Contents

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*)

Panel discussion: "Supporting United Nations country teams for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — in support of the field: a reinvigorated impartial and independent resident coordinator system"

Panel discussion: "Strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagement"

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/72/124-E/2018/3, A/72/684-E/2018/7 and A/73/63-E/2018/8)

1. **The Deputy Secretary-General**, delivering the keynote address, expressed condolences, on behalf of the Council, for the loss of Ms. Una McCauley, United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Sri Lanka.

2. She recalled that, at the 9th meeting of the Council's current session, participants had highlighted the need to enhance the skill sets and promote greater coherence in the work of resident coordinators, and to formulate United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) that ensured the accountability of the United Nations development system for results and to host Governments. Fostering national ownership of UNDAFs was particularly critical in that regard. Participants had also emphasized the importance of adapting development activities to national priorities and of ensuring predictable funding for those activities, in line with the demand-driven model proposed by the Secretary-General. Successful examples of inter-agency coordination, such as the Joint Office in Cabo Verde, demonstrated the possibility of repositioning the Organization to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. A reinvigorated resident coordinator system was central to the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the United Nations development system in support of the 2030 Agenda and to the mandates emanating from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Resident coordinators had one of the most challenging jobs at the United Nations, performing policy, programme, coordination and operational functions, all of which carried reputational risks for the Organization. They were responsible for coordinating the efforts of United Nations country teams with limited authority, resources and capacities and were often invited to contribute to national policymaking on development issues, despite the inadequacy of existing mechanisms for drawing on policy expertise from across the United Nations system. To effectively implement the 2030 Agenda, resident coordinators must ensure that the overall impact of the work of the development system was greater than that of its individual parts and, within country teams, must strike a balance between harnessing entity-specific expertise and encouraging cooperation among entities in support of national priorities.

4. To strengthen the resident coordinator system, the Secretary-General proposed to ensure that resident coordinators had the necessary authority, staffing capacity and access to seed funding to lead country teams in a results-oriented and accountable manner. Taking into account national priorities, resident coordinators would steer the substantive contributions of country teams to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; inform decision-making with regard to the presence and leadership of entities at the country level; and sign off on entity-specific country programme documents. A separation of the functions of resident coordinators and resident representatives of UNDP was also proposed in order to ensure that resident coordinators performed their functions in a transparent and accountable manner; to minimize real or perceived conflicts of interest; and to enable UNDP leadership to devote full attention to sustainable development mandates. In addition, a dual reporting system would be established to strengthen mutual accountability between resident coordinators and country teams for their work in support of the 2030 Agenda, while country team members would remain accountable to their respective entities. Lastly, the profile and functions of resident coordinators would be clarified on a country-by-country basis and the appointment process would be strengthened to ensure that resident coordinators had the skill sets required by country contexts, including those in which they performed additional duties as humanitarian coordinators and deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General.

5. Rather than reducing accountability to Member States, increased authority would enable resident coordinators to draw on the expertise of all United Nations entities in order to address country needs and priorities more effectively. National Governments would retain the prerogative to set development priorities; identify and draw on the capacities of entities relevant to their needs; and grant final clearance for resident coordinators to assume their duties. Improvements must also be made at the institutional level to ensure that cooperation among country team members was not solely dependent on personal relations and goodwill. Lastly, the Secretary-General proposed to ensure predictable funding for the resident coordinator system at a cost equivalent to only 1 per cent of the

annual contributions for operational activities for development, representing a strategic investment for the Organization.

Panel discussion: "Supporting United Nations country teams for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — in support of the field: a reinvigorated impartial and independent resident coordinator system"

6. **The President** asked how one might define the development-humanitarian nexus and characterize the challenges to its operationalization.

7. **Ms. Ruedas** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Sudan), panellist, said that, although reference was often made to a linear progression from humanitarian to development assistance, humanitarian, development and conflict prevention activities were typically conducted simultaneously in a given context, making it essential for all actors to work together in an effective and coordinated manner. For instance, reducing malnutrition, a priority identified in the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Sudan, required activities in the health, education and production sectors and could therefore not be addressed through humanitarian work alone. Coordination between the Government, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, donors and the private sector was being enhanced in order to secure funding for activities across all work streams in support of those Sustainable Development Goals with greatest relevance to the Sudan. The capacities of resident coordinators should be strengthened but should always be targeted to the specific needs of the country in question.

8. **The President** asked what steps needed to be taken to delink the functions of resident coordinators and UNDP resident representatives, while ensuring that UNDP continued to serve as an integrating support platform for resident coordinators.

9. **Ms. del Carmen Sacasa** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for Peru), panellist, said that, although Peru was an upper-middle-income country, it continued to face challenges such as inequality, poverty and vulnerability to climate change, particularly in the northern and Amazon regions, making it necessary for the Resident Coordinator to perform multiple roles. For instance, her Office had recently deployed humanitarian task forces to address the impact of El Niño in the northern part of the country. The United Nations country team in Peru comprised 16 resident agencies and 8 non-resident agencies, of which 50 per cent were regional and subregional entities that provided critical expertise in assessing the impact on development of migration from neighbouring countries. The country team was focusing specifically on addressing the needs of youth; developing joint analytics and disaggregated data to target vulnerable populations; drawing on expertise and best practices to address development needs holistically; and moving beyond a sector-based approach for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was also working to reduce the incidence of anaemia and malnutrition, which affected 43.5 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 35 months. The new UNDAF for 2017–2021 was aligned with national priorities and the 2030 Agenda, and her Office was designing an open web portal with an interactive map illustrating development gaps and country team initiatives by geographical area, which would enable development partners to monitor progress in real time, thereby strengthening accountability. As the activities of United Nations development entities in Peru continued to be funded primarily by non-core resources, she was collaborating with the Government to leverage blended financing.

10. **The President** asked what challenges resident coordinators faced in coordinating activities across the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding pillars of the Organization's work and what role UNDP would play within the new organizational structure proposed by the Secretary-General.

11. **Mr. Wahba** (Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, said that, as the former Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), he had had the opportunity to work across all three pillars of the Organization's work. While the capacities of resident coordinator offices needed to be strengthened, resident coordinators must also ensure that host countries received long-term development support following the closure of peacekeeping missions. Similarly, in seeking funding for its activities, the United Nations development system must work closely with Member States to ensure that priority was given to addressing not only the immediate aftermath of humanitarian crises, but also the medium- and long-term development needs that invariably contributed to such crises. In that regard, it was essential to promote broader understanding of the multiple factors contributing to challenges such as malnutrition, which was often caused not only by the non-availability of nutrient-rich foods but also by low income levels, as in the case of Yemen. Without wishing to pre-empt the Council's decisions with regard to the Secretary-General's proposals, he envisaged that UNDP

would serve as an integrating platform supporting resident coordinators in their coordination function and in carrying out operational activities.

12. **The President** requested further information on the implications and significance of the proposal, contained in chapter IV, section B, paragraph 64 of the Secretary-General's report (A/72/684-E/2018/7), to ensure that the authorities of resident coordinators in situations of humanitarian crisis or peacebuilding were clearly defined and to reinforce the accountability lines between resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in order to ensure that resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators were fully empowered to carry out humanitarian functions.

13. **Mr. Ging** (Director of the Division for Operations and Advocacy in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), panellist, said that, in recent years, clearer terms of reference had been formulated for humanitarian country teams, which emphasized the importance of ensuring accountability for results; developing a common analysis of the situation on the ground; defining precise objectives to be achieved, in line with the 2030 Agenda, as well as individual and collective responsibilities in that regard; granting appropriate decision-making authority to leadership; and promoting mutual accountability between leadership and team members. It was also essential to ensure an integrated approach in countries where resident coordinators also served as humanitarian coordinators and as deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General, while respecting the separate mechanisms established for carrying out development, humanitarian and peacebuilding activities.

14. Field operations should be underpinned by coherent support from Headquarters. In that regard, the recently established Joint Steering Committee to guide collective action by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for coordination of humanitarian assistance, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Administrator of UNDP serving as Vice-Chairs, would be critical for ensuring mutual accountability between Headquarters and the field. Indeed, the shortcomings of the Organization's humanitarian work in Haiti and Pakistan had clearly demonstrated the need for stronger leadership and responsiveness by Headquarters to the needs of field operations.

15. **Mr. Paust** (Germany) said that he would have appreciated a greater focus, in the Secretary-General's reports, on the role of a reinvigorated resident coordinator system in the context of the United Nations development system as a whole rather than in relation to the development-humanitarian nexus. He wished to know whether the strengthening of the resident coordinator system implied a reduction in the institutional and managerial authority of UNDG entities operating at the country level and, if so, what changes in the role of those entities were envisaged.

16. **Mr. Gad** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he agreed with the representative of Germany on the need for a broader examination of the relationship between the strengthened resident coordinator system and the wider United Nations development system. Resident coordinators must continue to give priority to promoting development, in particular eradicating poverty, and to implementing and fostering national ownership of UNDAFs.

17. Gender parity and geographical diversity would be critical for aligning resident coordinator skills and profiles with national sustainable development needs. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/243, resident coordinators must have the competencies needed to work across the development-humanitarian-peacebuilding continuum, as required by country contexts and in alignment with national priorities. Furthermore, the leadership and accountability of resident coordinators for the implementation of UNDAFs should be strengthened, and they should be empowered to make final decisions on UNDAF strategic objectives in consultation with Governments.

18. While the Group was in favour of common resource mobilization for country-level work, it would seek clarification with regard to the envisaged role of resident coordinators in leveraging pooled funding mechanisms. In addition, any increase in assessed contributions to cover the costs of a reinvigorated resident coordinator system should not impose a disproportionate burden on developing countries.

19. The matrixed reporting model proposed by the Secretary-General would ensure clear accountability lines between resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, including by guaranteeing that country team members reported to resident coordinators on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Resident coordinators should report regularly to the Secretary-General on the implementation of UNDAFs, with the scope, number and frequency of reports to be determined in consultation with host Governments, and more specific reporting requirements should be established in the case of resident coordinators who performed additional duties as humanitarian

coordinators and deputy special representatives. Moreover, the reporting channels through the regional directors of the entities of the United Nations development system should be clarified. While staffing requirements for resident coordinator offices should be agreed upon with host Governments, efforts must be made to recruit local staff. Lastly, the proposal to grant the Development Operations Coordination Office authority to manage and oversee the work of resident coordinators merited close consideration.

20. **Ms. Haque** (Observer for Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, asked which specific projects or programmes resident coordinators were implementing to support the transition of the United Nations development system from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to enhance the focus on the economic pillar of sustainable development. She also requested further information on the accountability lines between resident coordinators and host Governments and on the extent to which knowledge of the specific challenges faced by vulnerable countries, such as least developed countries, were taken into account in the resident coordinator selection process.

21. **Ms. Leyva Regueira** (Observer for Cuba) highlighted the importance of promoting strong leadership by Governments in addressing development priorities; preserving the development mandate of resident coordinators; guaranteeing the independence of United Nations development entities operating on the ground, particularly with regard to resource management; and ensuring the prerogative of Governments to communicate directly with those entities. She asked whether resident coordinators currently lacked adequate capacities to address development challenges and, if so, what steps the United Nations development system could take to strengthen them. She also wished to know what measures were being taken to strengthen the accountability of resident coordinators to national Governments.

22. **Mr. Bagwell** (United States of America) asked which qualities, skills and experiences resident coordinators required to serve as successful humanitarian coordinators and how those skills could be fostered within the resident coordinator system.

23. **Mr. Kulikov** (Russian Federation) asked whether the Secretary-General's proposal to maintain a minimum capacity of five substantive staff members in each resident coordinator office, with UNDP serving as an integrator platform, might result in conflict or duplication with existing arrangements for country team meetings. He also wondered about the specific challenges still posed by combining the roles of resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative, the extent of their independence under the new proposed system at the Headquarters and field levels, and how expenditures for UNDP and resident coordinators might now change.

24. **Mr. Alami** (Morocco) said that, while his delegation welcomed the proposed improvements to the resident coordinator system, he wondered whether a complete separation between the functions of resident coordinators and UNDP resident representatives would lead to the politicization of the role of resident coordinators, particularly in cases where they performed additional duties as humanitarian coordinators and deputy special representatives and were required to work alongside United Nations peacekeeping or political missions in conflict and post-conflict settings. He also asked whether the Deputy Secretary-General's role in overseeing inter-agency coordination and cooperation across the development-humanitarian nexus, with the support of UNDP, might increase the tendency to allocate a disproportionate share of financial resources to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, to the detriment of countries that required other types of support.

25. **Ms. Kenner** (United Kingdom) asked how operations at the field level would change if Member States agreed to enhance coordination across the development-humanitarian nexus, and what impact the lack of such an agreement would have on those most in need. She also asked how the panellists would respond to the concerns of those Member States that feared that increased coordination between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities would result in a diminished focus and reduction in the resources allocated to development activities.

26. **Ms. Steiger** (Observer for Switzerland) said that it was useful first to define, on the basis of a shared analysis of the situation on the ground, the collective responsibilities of the United Nations development system in a given country context, and then to establish the specific responsibilities of individual development entities in accordance with their mandates and capacities. She asked what might enhance the willingness of UNDG entities to provide sustainable funding for United Nations country teams to play an integrating, rather than merely coordinating, role.

27. **Ms. Cheng** Hongying (China) said that any reforms of United Nations country teams and the resident coordinator system should be conducted in consultation with host countries, and that country teams

should be fully accountable to host countries in implementing UNDAFs. She wished to know how the reforms proposed by the Secretary-General would contribute to strengthening the development mandate of resident coordinators. Coordination across the peacebuilding-development-humanitarian nexus should be conducted in strict accordance with the mandates emanating from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In view of the imbalance in the funding allocated to humanitarian and development activities, she asked how funding for development could be increased in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

28. **Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Observer for Brazil) said that Brazil was in favour of empowering resident coordinators to lead country teams in line with UNDAF objectives and with ownership by Governments, while ensuring that existing reporting lines were maintained in the case of United Nations development system entities that performed functions beyond the scope of operational activities for development. He asked how Member States could exercise effective oversight of the resident coordinator system and provide regular guidance for its improvement, and to what extent the potential financial gains from a more streamlined country presence could support the strengthening of the resident coordinator system.

29. **Ms. Clifford** (Observer for Australia) asked which tools were needed to strengthen the role of resident coordinators in implementing UNDAFs, particularly in contexts in which they performed additional duties as humanitarian coordinators or deputy special representatives, and how such tools would contribute to promoting partnerships with actors outside the United Nations system.

30. **Ms. Benjasil** (Observer for Thailand) asked whether the panellists agreed that the number of staff in each resident coordinator office should be adjusted depending on the size and composition of United Nations country teams, the level of coordination required, and specific country contexts; and that the reconfiguration of resident coordinator offices should unlock savings that could be redeployed to funds and programmes.

31. **Ms. Fladby** (Norway) asked whether the provisions in General Assembly resolution 71/243 and the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the empowerment of resident coordinators would be sufficient to ensure that resident coordinators exercised the necessary leadership.

32. **Mr. Momeni** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) asked how the United Nations system could provide effective support for addressing long-term national development priorities, in particular through the implementation of UNDAFs.

33. **Ms. del Carmen Sacasa** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for Peru) said that, in order to ensure that resident coordinators were empowered, independent and impartial, they must have the required expertise and access to necessary financial resources to achieve UNDAF objectives, to which end joint funding mechanisms would be essential. The United Nations country team in Peru, in conjunction with the Government and the social sector, had developed a comprehensive UNDAF focusing on four priority areas.

34. With regard to accountability mechanisms, a recently established joint steering committee comprising representatives of development entities operating in Peru had submitted its first progress report to the Government in 2017. The Government was expected to take the lead in addressing national development priorities, while the country team focused primarily on fulfilling critical needs, in particular those of vulnerable populations and youth. She also met regularly with the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs to discuss progress towards the goals established in the biannual work plans under the 2017–2021 UNDAF.

35. To be effective, resident coordinators required more standardized working methods, clearly defined reporting mechanisms, the authority to directly supervise programmes at the local level, and offices with sufficient capacity and expertise. For instance, her Office was currently collaborating with an expert from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Better coordination mechanisms for leveraging the expertise of regional commissions would also yield positive outcomes, as evidenced by the success of her Office's recent knowledge-sharing sessions with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and other development entities operating in Peru.

36. To strengthen the emphasis on the economic pillar of sustainable development, her Office had coordinated the implementation of initiatives to promote the sale of quinoa at competitive prices on national and international markets and to assist indigenous populations in the Amazon region in marketing their native products. Moreover, with funding from the Government, the World Food Programme and the private sector, her Office was coordinating the production of a television programme focusing on collaboration between Peruvian chefs and local communities in the Andes and Amazon regions in

developing recipes using local ingredients in order to combat anaemia and malnutrition. A separation between the three pillars of the Organization's work was important in principle. However, the vulnerability of all countries to climate change meant that country teams, while retaining their primary focus on development, were often required to respond suddenly to humanitarian emergencies.

37. **Ms. Ruedas** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Sudan) said that striking the right balance of funding between humanitarian and development needs was not fundamentally the responsibility of the resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators but rather a matter for Member States to address in conjunction with them. It was also incumbent upon Member States to discuss how funding streams could be better coordinated and channelled towards a given situation. Many issues were a blend of both humanitarian and development aspects, while the funding provided often made an unhelpful distinction between the two. Pooled funds were extraordinarily useful as they were far more capable of responding to an evolving context than the usual mechanisms for funding and programming. Greater support for pooled mechanisms would provide a valuable tool in the arsenal of the resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators.

38. While cautioning against any simplistic approaches, she agreed that resident coordinators should be deployed to the countries to which they were best suited, according to their profiles, and where they could provide the best possible support. They were mandated to report regularly to host countries, which unquestionably retained their leadership roles in that relationship.

39. **Mr. Wahba** (Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that being a resident coordinator was a full-time job and, from his own experience, resident coordinators simply did not have sufficient time to carry out additional duties as humanitarian coordinators or resident representatives. In his view, the most important qualities of successful resident coordinators were leadership, entrepreneurship, patience and a sense of humour.

40. Stressing that UNDAFs were only as good as the results framework that underpinned them, he said that truly empowered resident coordinators should have the capacity to bring together resources and results, and that Governments would be able to oversee their roles and measure the extent of the progress they had made. Strong resident coordinators would also be able to find development angles in all areas of activity, including across the humanitarian and peacebuilding sectors. They would therefore achieve more development benefits for host countries.

41. **Mr. Ging** (Director of the Division for Operations and Advocacy in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) said that persons in senior leadership positions must have operational experience in the humanitarian field, where the premium was on rapid decision-making. While most managers in the field had the requisite skills, it could still be difficult to move the best people into the positions where they were needed within the wider United Nations system because organizations naturally wanted to hold onto them. Under the new approach outlined by the Secretary-General everyone would need to assume a collective responsibility for making the best people available for leadership positions, and also for making those positions more attractive to them. The starting point for the new mindset should be contributing collectively to ending need and working together as efficiently and effectively as possible. Development system reform would increase accountability and value added across the board.

Panel discussion "Strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagement"

42. **The President** asked what role was played by the United Nations Global Compact in the process of strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagement.

43. **Mr. Power** (Deputy Director of the United Nations Global Compact), panellist, said that partnerships with the private sector would clearly be essential for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Thankfully the 2030 Agenda was beginning to ripple through the private sector and the business community: 80 per cent of companies in the Global Compact believed that the Goals provided a compelling business framework for their strategies and objectives, and 75 per cent were already engaged in action to implement the 2030 Agenda.

44. Many companies in the Global Compact, large and small, saw the 2030 Agenda as a partnership agenda. While companies already benefited from a "passport for partnerships" to help them to navigate the system, it was clear that local needs for partnerships at the country level were still not being fully met. To address that challenge it would be important for local networks within the Global Compact to be involved in designing partnership pathways and approaches within countries so that a bottom-up locally designed approach was adopted, rather than one that was top-down.

45. As the importance of principles in relation to partnership arrangements could not be overstated, he

welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure the acceptance of the 10 principles of the Global Compact as a common partnership standard. Partnerships that failed to incorporate standards in such areas as human rights, labour, the environment and the fight against corruption risked undoing a lot of very important work.

46. **The President** requested further information about the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. He wondered about the Network's view of the Secretary-General's proposal to create an integrity task force to manage risks of United Nations-business engagement and foster a pool of "partner-ready" companies.

47. **Ms. Manderino** (Associate Director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network), panellist, accompanying her statement with a digital slide presentation, said that the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network had been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the Secretary-General. The Network mobilized global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development. Its Leadership Council had brought together sustainable development leaders from around the world. The Network now had a small secretariat with offices in New York, Paris and New Delhi.

48. The membership of the Network currently totalled some 700 institutions, which mainly consisted of universities as well as think tanks and research organizations working in partnership with businesses, civil society and Governments in over 100 countries. Many of the Network's members worked together in regional, national and thematic networks in support of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Members could use the Network's online knowledge-sharing platform to access best practices and solutions drawn from global studies and other members of the Network. In partnership with national Governments and United Nations teams, members could help to diagnose challenges to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; mobilize young people from universities to use their creativity and knowledge to promote the Goals; carry out technical analysis of policies and plans; host participatory dialogues and forums to present objective options; and support monitoring and evaluation, among other activities.

49. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals required deep transformations in such sectors as energy, land use and food systems. For that reason, the Network had developed "pathways projects" which could help to ensure that short-term policies and investments were consistent with longer-term strategies. One pathways project aimed to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, for example, while another initiative addressed the lack of integrated analysis across the related food, agriculture, biodiversity, land use and energy sectors. The absence of a coordinated policy across those sectors made it more difficult for businesses to know where to invest.

50. Education was also vital for the realization of the Goals. In that respect, the Network had published a guide for stakeholders: *Getting Started with the Sustainable Development Goals*. It had also established an online education platform, the Sustainable Development Goals Academy, which included extensive free courses on the Goals. The Network was looking forward to expanding its partnership work at the country level with United Nations country teams.

51. **The President** was interested to hear the views of civil society regarding the Secretary-General's proposal to empower resident coordinator offices to serve as a one-stop-shop for partnerships with external partners.

52. **Ms. Adams** (Senior Policy Advisor at the Global Policy Forum), panellist, said that civil society organizations were natural allies of the United Nations in terms of addressing climate change, conserving biodiversity, promoting decent work and advancing women's rights. However, the question of how engagement by civil society was facilitated through partnerships, including by means of the proposed one-stop-shop, was a different matter.

53. To date, partnership had been one way in which civil society had engaged with the United Nations but it was not the primary way. While civil society had certainly been very active in contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the level of its engagement at the country level was different from that at the resident coordinator level. Most civil society groups were aware of the Goals but were unlikely to know about UNDAFs, for example, although those were the primary interactive vehicle at the resident coordinator level.

54. A question worth asking was how to include the beneficiaries of partnerships in a partnership modality. After all, it was important to bear in mind that, in order to be a part of the Sustainable Development Goals, many people were dependent on different mechanisms in democratic governance and on the provision of essential public services. Another relevant question was how expectations for partnerships and the results delivered should actually be measured. In the context of the Goals, indicator 17.17.1, for example, referred to the amount of United States dollars committed to public-private and civil society partnerships. However, in many cases that

indicator would be inadequate as a means of measuring stronger partnerships with civil society organizations at the country level. It was also worth noting that the approach taken to partnerships to date tended to treat the private sector as the "preferred partner".

55. Civil society organizations were looking for public resources to provide essential services. In their view, fair and progressive taxation was the primary means of leveraging resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They would therefore be very concerned if principles for partnerships did not exclude companies involved in tax avoidance or evasion, for instance, or those used as channels for illicit financial flows.

56. The key to successful engagement with civil society was the universality of the 2030 Agenda, which made it attractive to civil society as a whole. However, given the enormous diversity of civil society, she hesitated to claim to speak on behalf of all civil society and still had reservations about the ability of a one-stop shop to fully accommodate its various partnership needs.

57. **The President**, recalling the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the United Nations Office for Partnerships as the Organization's global gateway for partnerships, asked how partnerships could be improved between United Nations agencies and the business community.

58. **Mr. Wilson** (Permanent Observer of the International Chamber of Commerce to the United Nations), panellist, said that the concept of the United Nations Office for Partnerships acting as a gatekeeper might be well intentioned but would be unduly limiting if it was interpreted to mean controlling access to the United Nations. To effectively mobilize the kinds of partnerships envisaged by the 2030 Agenda for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations would need to reach out to businesses and engage them in areas where they could be of distinct added value through an inclusive approach.

59. An effective gatekeeper however would be a hub or one-stop-shop for businesses seeking to interact with the United Nations. In that capacity, the United Nations Office for Partnerships could act as a primary account manager that showed small and medium enterprises who to contact within the United Nations and how to engage effectively in partnerships. In that context, the Office should also highlight examples of best practice and reach out to the business community in search of areas where private sector involvement would be of genuine benefit to the United Nations, such as big data, or areas where there were opportunities to transform strategic partnerships in such core areas as food security and humanitarian relief.

60. **Mr. Kimmel** (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly encouraged the United Nations to view the private sector not only as a potential source of funding, but also as a source of expertise and innovation from which the Organization could learn to improve its work. As the private sector was a fundamental driver of prosperity, he would be interested to hear more about the comparative advantages of private sector engagement in voluntary partnerships.

61. **Mr. Elkhishin** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the United Nations development system had been mandated in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to assist Governments in leveraging their own partnerships. In that context, he asked how the United Nations development system could help Governments to achieve that outcome and ensure that partnership resources were aligned with national priorities and strategic programmes.

62. The Group wished to note that the Secretary-General's proposal to make resident coordinator offices country-level hubs for partnership went beyond General Assembly resolution 71/243, which did not provide for such a mandate. It was also unclear what role Governments would have in such a system.

63. Regarding the acceptance of the 10 principles of the Global Compact as a common partnership standard to strengthen system-wide integrity, the Group wished to stress that any such standards must be the outcome of intergovernmental processes.

64. South-South cooperation was a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation, which remained the most important channel for mobilizing the resources needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group urged developed countries to make concrete efforts to fulfil and increase their official development assistance commitments.

65. Improvements in partnerships would allow the United Nations development system to address the diverse needs of different developing countries. Welcoming the proposal to enhance partnerships with the World Bank and other international financial institutions, the Group encouraged the incorporation of new and regional development banks in such arrangements and said that it would also appreciate further initiatives regarding complementary funding mechanisms.

66. **Ms. Chen Song** (China) said that partnerships provided solid support for the implementation of the

2030 Agenda. The private sector and other stakeholders could play an even bigger role in that respect, with the consent of Member States. However, the reform initiatives undertaken should fully reflect the fact that South-South cooperation remained a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South Cooperation.

67. **Mr. Engels** (Observer for the Netherlands) said that it was vital to expand partnerships with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He would particularly welcome more information on the potential role of the private sector in the context of the United Nations Global Compact and what the latter could do to ensure that potential partner companies complied with the Organization's due diligence standards.

68. **Ms. Steiger** (Observer for Switzerland) said that partnership arrangements with civil society would inevitably be complicated by the extent of the latter's sheer diversity. Academia, for example, was not represented on the panel. The 2030 Agenda was challenging hierarchical ideas about partnerships, in which one partner had more power than the other. The roles of donor and recipient Governments and other stakeholders, whether in civil society or the private sector, were also increasingly being questioned. A deeper understanding of such matters would help to further the discussion of partnerships and hopefully lead to the adoption of a less simplistic approach.

69. **Mr. Amin** (Afghanistan) said that his delegation attached great importance to partnerships as a means for least developed countries to achieve self-reliance and that the regional dimension of partnerships was particularly important for landlocked least developed countries. In that context, he wondered whether the regional dimension of partnerships could be identified as a cross-cutting idea in the six partnership-related work streams proposed by the Secretary-General and how it could be mainstreamed in the work of the United Nations Office for Partnerships to empower resident coordinator offices to serve as a one-stop-shop for partnerships.

70. **Mr. Paust** (Germany) said that while he supported the Secretary-General's overall approach to partnerships, he was concerned that the proposed one-stop-shop might risk overloading the resident coordinator offices.

71. **Ms. Haque** (Observer for Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, asked about the implications of the Secretary-General's proposal for resident coordinator offices to serve as central hubs for resource mobilization, and how his recommendations would impact existing mechanisms for collaboration.

72. **Ms. Clifford** (Observer for Australia) asked what constituted a good enabling environment for partnerships and what changes might be needed to achieve that outcome.

73. **Ms. Zahir** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that partnerships were vital for the successful implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the 2030 Agenda. However, in view of the limited capacities of small island developing States, the way in which they engaged in those partnerships was equally important. The United Nations development system would therefore have a crucial role to play in facilitating partnerships. She would be particularly interested to hear how the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework would be incorporated into the Secretary-General's proposed recommendations. Rather than leveraging partnerships through the United Nations development system, a standardized system-wide approach to partnerships through the United Nations system as a whole might produce a more even playing field.

74. **Ms. Benjasil** (Observer for Thailand) said that while her delegation strongly supported the work of the United Nations Global Compact, its 10 principles might be too simple to use as a common partnership standard for the United Nations development system. Furthermore, given that each United Nations entity had its own specific mandate, due diligence standards for partnerships between the United Nations development system and the private sector could not be common across the board. A more sophisticated and differentiated approach would therefore be needed in that regard.

75. **Mr. Power** (Deputy Director of the United Nations Global Compact) said that companies committed to the United Nations Global Compact were required to produce an annual progress report describing the implementation of their relevant activities. Over 7,000 companies had been expelled from the Global Compact for a failure to demonstrate progress in relation to the 10 principles. However, many examples of best practices could be found in the thousands of reports available on the official website. Furthermore, the 10 principles themselves were derived from core United Nations declarations and conventions and had been endorsed by over 9,000 companies that were equally spread among developed, developing and least developed countries.

76. **Ms. Manderino** (Associate Director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network)

said that while she supported the idea of an integrity task force to evaluate potential partners, it was also helpful to think more broadly about the meaning of "partner-ready" companies. The latter might encompass such concepts as a willingness to take a long-term view, to bridge cultural, financial and resource gaps, and to adapt business models to the realities of low-income countries. United Nations country teams could play a key role in helping to bridge gaps and facilitate partnerships.

77. **Mr. Wilson** (Permanent Observer of the International Chamber of Commerce to the United Nations) said that while a one-stop-shop could not be expected to manage every step of the partnership process, it could be effective as a primary account manager or facilitator which helped the United Nations to engage meaningfully with the private sector. He agreed that the private sector could provide more than pure financing and that the United Nations should look at ways in which the business community could add value to the work of the United Nations across the board.

78. **Ms. Adams** (Senior Policy Advisor at the Global Policy Forum) said that it was essential to engage all parts of civil society in partnerships, but that would be difficult to do with a one-size-fits-all approach. Nurturing partnerships was an entirely different role to the vetting or oversight of partnerships, for example, and those distinct activities could not be undertaken by the same entity. However, there appeared to be some conflation of those concepts in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/684-E/2018/7), particularly in paragraph 137 thereof. Furthermore, the 10 principles of the Global Compact predated the 2030 Agenda, did little to motivate civil society and were unlikely to work in the overall context of a one-stop-shop approach. She hoped that the partnership recommendations did not become the Achilles heel of the Secretary-General's proposed reforms, which otherwise enjoyed broad support.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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Summary record of the 11th meeting
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President: Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Vice-President) ..... (Belgium)

Contents

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme

Interactive dialogue with the executive heads of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies on planning and delivering collective results

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/72/124–E/2018/3, A/72/684–E/2018/7 and A/73/63–E/2018/8)

1. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/73/63–E/2018/8), said that the three major agreements adopted in 2015 — the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development — had imposed high demands on the development system. The report provided a factual assessment of how the United Nations development system was shifting to support implementation of the new mandates at the national, regional and global levels. The report had benefited from surveys conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs targeting programme country Governments, resident coordinators, operations management teams and entity headquarters, and from data provided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Office, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the High-level Committee on Management and the High-level Committee on Programmes.

2. Alignment of the United Nations development system's planning and activities with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was still in its initial stages, partly because of the sequencing of internal planning and management alternatives. A common chapter in the strategic plans of four United Nations entities for the period 2018–2021 was a first step. The areas in which the development system had made the most contributions to date primarily concerned the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, namely health, food security, poverty eradication, gender equality and education. Looking forward, the Organization would need to boost its capacities in other areas. The United Nations had been successful in assisting Governments to identify those furthest behind, but less so in helping Governments to reach them, primarily owing to a scarcity of resources.

3. While the development system was effective in developing national capacities, Governments saw the need for a more systematic and coordinated approach to capacity development that made more use of national systems and institutions. The system needed to shift away from sectoral entity-based approaches and strengthen its own capacity to provide integrated policy advice, particularly in middle-income countries, where resident coordinators had highlighted the need to move away from direct support towards policy advice and innovative thinking around resource mobilization.

4. Funding for operational activities for development had more than doubled since 2002, reaching $29.5 billion in 2016, largely because of a significant increase in humanitarian funding. However, the quality of funding was deteriorating: the core share of total funding for operational activities for development was only 24 per cent; there had been no growth in contributions to flexible, non-core funding modalities or inter-agency pooled funds; and contributions through thematic funds had declined. Over 70 per cent of country-level expenditure was concentrated in 27 countries. At the other end of the spectrum, total expenditure for 79 programme countries was less than $50 million, amounting to an average of just $2.7 million per entity present in each country.

5. Mechanisms and capacities in support of leveraging the partnerships needed to implement the 2030 Agenda were a work in progress. Few entities tracked the status and results of partnerships, and more effective policies and guidelines were needed to mitigate potential risks to the reputation of the Organization. The development system must be able to assist Governments in leveraging partnerships to mobilize funding, technology, knowledge and expertise. South-South cooperation had been incorporated into the strategic plans of most entities and 84 per cent of Governments reported that the country teams supported South-South cooperation activities.

6. The presence of the United Nations must be tailored to the specific needs of countries to maximize results and achieve efficiencies. Resident coordinators had reported skills gaps in various areas, including economic analysis and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and had highlighted the limited capacities and authority of resident coordinator offices. Many resident coordinators had commented on potential synergies that could improve the efficiency of human,

financial and physical resources, calling for increased joint programming or even making that the default mode. They had also made proposals on how to improve presence on the ground.

7. Roughly half of programme country Governments had reported that the regional commissions contributed effectively to their countries most pressing regional issues. However, resident coordinators indicated having limited benefits from interaction with the regional commissions, which frequently interfaced directly with Governments. Alternative, cost-effective programmatic models should therefore be explored at both the country and regional levels to improve the interface between United Nations country teams and regional commissions.

8. There was a need to harmonize business practices and shift towards a common back office. The growing number of business operations strategies was already a step forward. Some 75 per cent of United Nations country teams viewed different rules and regulations as the largest barrier to harmonizing business practices. The United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management were working to address that issue.

9. Lastly, action was necessary on key aspects of results-based management. Governments agreed on the need to simplify United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), rationalize agency-specific programming and planning processes, and improve the content and coverage of reporting to Governments. There was scope for evaluating UNDAFs more rigorously and improving the management response.

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (E/2017/34/Rev.1, E/2018/36 and E/2018/65)

Interactive dialogue with the executive heads of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies on planning and delivering collective results

10. **The President** asked how the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would ensure that the particular challenges faced by the most vulnerable countries would continue to receive priority attention following the reform of the United Nations development system.

11. **Mr. Steiner** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, said that UNDP would continue to prioritize the needs and concerns of low-income and least developed countries, with a particular focus on eradicating poverty and addressing climate change, as evidenced by its flagship initiatives. Under the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, over 80 per cent of resources were earmarked for low-income and least developed countries. Much of the 2030 Agenda centred around the economy as a way to address such issues as inequality and sustainability. While the way in which inequality was discussed varied from one region or organization to another, the economic fundamentals remained the same. The Sustainable Development Goals had focused the attention of the United Nations development system on collective action to meet needs of the most vulnerable countries and ensure that no one was left behind.

12. **The President** asked how the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) would bring its strategic plan into line with the proposed United Nations system-wide strategic document (A/72/684–E/2018/7, annex) and ensure that its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda were integrated into UNDAFs.

13. **Ms. Fore** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), panellist, said that to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations system must work together, make efficiency savings and accelerate results through innovation and external partnerships. The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, recognized that when a child's nutrition improved, so too did his or her health and ability to learn and, ultimately, earn, thereby helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It was important to ensure that emergency responses to humanitarian disasters had a long-term impact by fostering sustainable development and making communities more resilient.

14. Inter-agency collaboration could help to close implementation gaps. For example, achieving Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation — an area in which UNICEF had a great deal of expertise — required a collective approach, through partnerships such as Sanitation and Water for All. UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) were working together to implement a common chapter in their strategic plans at all levels, including in the field, and across the programming cycle. The individual country programmes of each entity must be built around collectively identified UNDAFs and national priorities. Resident coordinators should convene country teams

around the Goals in a coordinated and systematic way. The focus must be on outcomes and results, rather than on process and coordination.

15. It was important to find new ways to support adolescents, as addressing the needs of young people would help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. On the ground, country teams had a key role to play, from analysis and planning to the delivery and monitoring of youth programmes. The United Nations must also establish external partnerships and build a broad coalition of Governments, local and global businesses and non-governmental organizations, with a view to identifying and applying accelerators such as knowledge, data and innovative solutions. UNICEF was already working with the private sector on projects such as online learning for remote communities. United Nations entities must continue to establish common premises, as UNICEF had done in Liberia, resulting in significant savings. UNICEF was piloting similar projects around the world, with a view to establishing common back offices in all countries by 2022.

16. **The President** asked what impact the Joint Steering Committee to advance humanitarian and development collaboration might have at the executive level of the United Nations.

17. **Mr. Beasley** (Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP)), panellist, speaking via video link from Rome, said that the Joint Steering Committee was an extremely practical forum for discussing inter-agency collaboration, particularly as what worked in one country or context might not work elsewhere. The reform process was an opportunity for the United Nations to become more efficient and effective. However having an optimal organizational structure was immaterial if United Nations staff did not support it. If the resident coordinators approached their work with a positive attitude and were committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, a great deal could be achieved. As the logistical arm of the United Nations, WFP had a history of working closely with the rest of the United Nations system.

18. The international community must go beyond merely feeding people and adopt a collective, holistic approach. A piecemeal, silo mentality would cost more in the long run and result in mass migration, conflict and chaos. In the Tigray region of Ethiopia, for example, WFP had worked successfully with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to transform millions of acres of previously barren land and promote sustainable development, thereby creating business opportunities and jobs while eradicating hunger. However, in the Somali region of Ethiopia, food and water were still being brought in by truck for over 3 million people. Extremist groups could take advantage of such crises to move in, which would have a destabilizing effect. Another problem was desertification, which was forcing pastoralists to travel beyond their traditional pasturelands, increasing the risk of conflict.

19. The international community must also engage with the private sector, which had been shunned for too long. WFP was already working with the private sector in areas such as digitalization, biometrics and blockchain technology, with a view to bringing down costs and improving effectiveness.

20. **The President** said that the Secretary-General, in his report on repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda (A/72/684–E/2018/7), had stated that the specialized agencies, funds and programmes should be more accountable for system-wide mandates and actions, as well as for collective results. He asked how the International Labour Organization (ILO) would respond to that proposal.

21. **Mr. Ryder** (Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO)), panellist, speaking via video link from Geneva, said that ILO supported the Secretary-General's reform agenda and had embraced the 2030 Agenda from the beginning. The Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 8 on good jobs and economic growth, gave a central place to the decent work agenda of ILO, which had an institutional opportunity and a responsibility to contribute to system-wide mandates. In 2016, ILO had aligned its strategic planning periodicity with the United Nations planning framework, with a view to better contributing to system-wide mandates. ILO had also benchmarked its programmatic activities against the Goals.

22. ILO was engaging actively in various alliances established to deliver on different areas of the 2030 Agenda, including social protection, youth employment, forced labour, child labour, human trafficking and equal pay for men and women. In March 2018, the Deputy Secretary-General would address the ILO Governing Body on the reform process, enabling both the constituents of ILO and United Nations staff in Geneva to receive a direct account of the situation in New York. At the country level, ILO was working actively to align its decent work country programmes with UNDAFs. However, as a specialized agency, ILO had its own mandate and structure, and was accountable to its Governing Body. While that was not a barrier to greater cohesion, such realities must be taken into account when

making proposals to ensure common accountability for system-wide mandates.

23. **The President** asked how the regional commissions could contribute to the road map recommended by the Secretary-General in paragraph 23 (b) of the United Nations system-wide strategic document (A/72/684–E/2018/7, annex). He also wished to know how the United Nations development system could prevent the duplication of work among its various entities.

24. **Ms. Bárcena** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); and current Coordinator of the Regional Commissions), panellist, said that the regional commissions had originally been created as intergovernmental platforms to collect and monitor regional data. They aligned the figures provided by Governments and the private sector to produce statistics that might be different to those of the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund but were harmonized throughout the United Nations system. Those statistics were then made available to specialized agencies, but primarily to Member States.

25. It was important to note that, as intergovernmental platforms rather than specialized agencies, regional commissions interacted directly with Member States on the basis of multilateralism, cooperation and integration. They had a dual function of convening specialized sectoral meetings between Member States and specialized agencies in a given region, and collecting data from national statistics offices and government ministries and departments. At regional forums on sustainable development, they brought together Governments to carry out joint assessments of each country's progress towards the 2030 Agenda and its capacity to measure all indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals. The aim was to provide Member States with the information necessary for them to build their own capacities.

26. The Secretary-General's reform aimed to empower systems at the national level. Globalization had brought about progress in some areas but had also caused inequality and had concentrated wealth and technology in the hands of a few. Since many of the means of implementation to address economic problems were at the international or regional level, countries lacked national instruments to empower themselves. In an increasingly complex world order, regional commissions therefore assessed the main challenges facing Member States and assisted them in negotiating processes, even outside the United Nations system. ECLAC had, for example, recently worked closely with the Pacific Ocean Alliance to empower its States parties in trade negotiations. As the 2030 Agenda was universal, it was far more efficient to conduct dialogue by region than to convene all 129 resident coordinators and 193 Member States.

27. To avoid duplication of work, the United Nations development system should establish multilateral intergovernmental platforms in which the regional offices of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies interacted directly with Member States. Such platforms should work on the basis of peer analysis and reflect the multisectoral nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. They could also be used to promote policy research on applied economics and evidence-based follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, with the aim of strengthening public policy.

28. Regional commissions could provide comparative analysis and fresh economic thinking only if they had access to the realities on the ground. The commissions had achieved considerable efficiencies after two successive bienniums of cuts and had now aligned their programmes with the 2030 Agenda. She proposed holding a special session within the framework of the Economic and Social Council to demonstrate the benefits of collaboration between the regional commissions and the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

29. **The President** asked how UN-Women would integrate the strategic global flagship initiatives into its strategic plan.

30. **Mr. Glemarec** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), panellist, said that in drawing up its strategic plan, UN-Women had tried to anticipate requests by Member States for measures to be ready for immediate implementation. The UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021 was aligned with the common chapter, which in turn was harmonized with the system-wide strategic document and the global flagship initiatives. The UN-Women Executive Board had recently deliberated about whether to set a target for the percentage of the Entity's initiatives to be implemented as standalone projects under UNDAFs and as flagship programme initiatives. In the end, the Executive Board had decided to defer the decision for a few years but expected most UN-Women programmes in the future to be conducted through flagship initiatives.

31. UN-Women fully supported the repositioning of the United Nations development system and intended to leverage the combined strength of United Nations entities to accelerate efforts towards improving gender

equality and empowering women. There had already been excellent progress in that regard: the number of UNDAFs with a common work area on gender equality and the empowerment of women had increased from 47 to 62 per cent since 2010. UN-Women was endeavouring to seize the opportunities created by that upward trend by incorporating guidance from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the Secretary-General's reports into its strategic plan.

32. Many initiatives had moved from the planning to the implementation phase. At the global level, UN-Women was implementing the Spotlight Initiative, a joint project launched in September 2017 by the United Nations and the European Union focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. At the national level, all activities of UN-Women were being implemented as part of joint United Nations programmes under the leadership of empowered resident coordinators. The Executive Board had agreed that it would report annually on the progress made by UN-Women in its implementation of the flagship initiatives and its adherence to the common chapter and the United Nations system-wide document.

33. **The President** asked how agencies like UNFPA could contribute to a system-wide approach to partnerships.

34. **Mr. Alakbarov** (Director of the Programme Division of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), panellist, said that the common chapter had accelerated the drive for a common approach to the 2030 Agenda: 60 per cent of UNFPA indicators were currently adapted to Sustainable Development Goal indicators and 53 per cent of the outcome and output indicators of the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women were aligned. Moreover, 85 per cent of indicators currently addressed Economic and Social Council mandates to boost national ownership of projects and scale up results.

35. The UNFPA strategic plan, 2018–2021, focused on three transformative goals: an end to the unmet need for family planning; an end to preventable maternal deaths; and an end to all harmful practices against women and girls. Nevertheless, the 2030 Agenda was a shared promise that could not be implemented without sound and reliable data. Over the next four years UNFPA intended to work with the Statistics Division, the regional commissions and UNDP on the implementation of censuses in over 150 countries and territories in order to empower national and regional actors with strong data and evidence.

36. UNFPA, which valued its partnerships with all United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, had launched the HIV prevention 2020 road map with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, was co-chair of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition with UNICEF and participated in the Spotlight Initiative. It had recently created the Demographic Dividend Atlas for Africa, which contained data to help Governments to track progress. UNFPA had also launched numerous projects in the Sahel region, including a recent campaign to raise awareness among young people about the importance of their physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health.

37. Since partnerships were impossible to maintain without sufficient and predictable funding, the reduction in core contributions to United Nations specialized agencies was a serious cause for concern. UNFPA therefore supported efforts to work with the private sector and non-traditional partners and advocated continuing discussions on a funding compact. The newly-created Joint Policy Fund to Advance the 2030 Agenda through Integrated Policy was also a good example of integrated policy and partnership support within the United Nations development system.

38. UNFPA, which was being restructured and looking for further efficiencies, fully supported the Secretary-General's proposed reform of the development system. UNFPA had integrated its back offices with UNDP in every country, including all banking and administrative services; its country office had been co-located in most Member States; and UNFPA had already agreed to be represented by UNDP in a number of countries.

39. **Mr. Aguirre Vacchieri** (Chile) welcomed the fact that, in comparison with the previous year's Council session, United Nations entities appeared to have accepted the need to move away from a silo approach towards closer cooperation. He wondered what the advantages and disadvantages might be of the Secretary-General's proposal to create a joint executive board of the New York-based funds, programmes and specialized agencies. In addition, while acknowledging that a regional approach made it more efficient to channel resources and initiatives, he asked the Executive Secretary of ECLAC what added value Member States and the United Nations development system could derive from regional forums on sustainable development.

40. **Ms. Nguyen** Phuong Nga (Viet Nam) asked what challenges the New York-based funds, programmes and specialized agencies had faced in applying the new working methods, especially the co-location of offices and rearrangement of work by thematic clusters. It would also be useful to know how best to improve the cohesion, efficiencies and effectiveness of United

Nations country teams in the face of significant reductions in core resources.

41. **Ms. Zahir** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, asked to what extent the strategic plans of United Nations entities incorporated the mandate contained in paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 71/243 regarding support for developing and vulnerable countries. She also expressed concern that the Secretary-General's proposal to streamline country presence might, in the long term, have a negative impact on smaller entities that consistently served as non-resident agencies.

42. **Ms. Fladby** (Norway) asked what individual funds, programmes and specialized agencies could do to simplify their country programming procedures and whether it might be conceivable for the country programmes to be discontinued altogether. She also wondered whether steps had been taken to grant resident coordinators greater leadership, such as the authority to approve the annual work plans of United Nations entities.

43. Given the insufficient investment in gender equality and women's empowerment highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/684–E/2018/7), she enquired whether there were plans to introduce common gender markers for the entire United Nations system. Increasing linkages between results and resources would help to illustrate the progress that was being made for women.

44. She encouraged the United Nations to ensure that entities within the United Nations development system operated according to the principle of mutual recognition of best practices. That principle was particularly important in the case of joint programmes, which tended to entail heavy transaction costs.

45. **Mr. Chang** (United States of America) asked the panellists about their experience of working with sister agencies and what they would like to change or improve in such relationships. It would also be interesting to know what improvements could be made to the system-wide strategic document to help United Nations entities work together more effectively.

46. **Mr. Elkhishin** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review provided the mandate for United Nations system-wide strategic policy orientations and operational modalities for development cooperation. Reform of the United Nations development system should aim to foster system-wide support for the national priorities and needs of developing countries. In that vein, United Nations country teams and United Nations development system entities should align their work and strategic plans with the national development strategies of developing countries.

47. The substantive overlap between the Secretary-General's report on repositioning the United Nations development system (A/72/684–E/2018/7) and the United Nations system-wide strategic document (A/72/684–E/2018/7, annex) could lead to unnecessary duplication and confusion. The Group wished to express its preference to focus on the report of the Secretary-General.

48. General Assembly resolution 71/243 was a development-focused resolution that sought to address the overarching goal of poverty eradication. In that context, the proposed cross-pillar approach of the system-wide strategic document went beyond the mandate of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and risked shifting the focus of the United Nations development system away from development. In accordance with paragraph 24 of the above resolution, the linkages between development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts should be limited to enhancing coordination among those three areas at the national level within the specific context of countries facing humanitarian emergencies and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

49. Lastly, the proposal to consider the system-wide document as a "living document" also went beyond the mandate provided for in General Assembly resolution 71/243.

50. **Mr. Momeni** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the United Nations development system had good capacity for helping Member States to tackle their common problems. However, it lacked a focal point responsible for capacity-building to distinguish between the capacity-building needs of developing and developed countries. He asked what regional commissions expected to gain from the reform process and what the United Nations could do to better equip them for regional challenges and crises.

51. **Ms. Steiger** (Observer for Switzerland) said that her delegation would appreciate clarification on what was meant by the results-based approach of the common chapter. To ascertain the specific impact of the common chapter on how agencies worked together, it would be useful for entities' integrated results and resource frameworks to list the contributions of the common chapter more specifically. Her delegation would also welcome specific examples of the challenges faced in meeting the objectives listed in the common chapter. She wondered whether the rationale behind creating a

platform for the four organizations applying the common chapter was to divide labour more efficiently and thus make the entities compete with each other less.

52. **Ms. Andreyeva** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation would be interested to hear how the funds, programmes and specialized agencies incentivized and maintained a collective focus on innovation, which was one of the key factors in the results-based approach of the reform process. She also wished to know which fields would be emphasized as priorities at the regional level to reduce duplication of work. She asked how ILO complied with the Secretary-General's proposals regarding common business services and back-office functions.

53. **Ms. Banos** (El Salvador) said that her delegation appreciated the way in which ILO was measuring the Sustainable Development Goal indicators for which it was custodian and wondered whether other entities had implemented, or planned to implement, similar strategies to measure results. She would welcome details on the efforts of regional commissions to harmonize measurements of indicators.

54. **Ms. Lagrange** (France), commending UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women on their adoption of ambitious plans as part of the common chapter, asked how they intended to work together to achieve the objectives of the strategic document; how the funds, programmes and specialized agencies would improve coverage of the Sustainable Development Goals and avoid duplication, while leaving space for non-United Nations partners to contribute to the advancement of Agenda 2030; how the New York-based funds and programmes would participate in the Joint Steering Committee to advance humanitarian and development collaboration; and what the panellists saw as the benefits of the United Nations regional commissions and regional development groups.

55. **Mr. Rahman** (Observer for Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that while the Secretary-General's report (A/72/684–E/2018/7) referred to gaps in coverage of the Sustainable Development Goals, the system-wide strategic document gave little indication of how to address them. He asked the panellists what measures could be taken to overcome those gaps.

56. Bangladesh and other least developed countries were concerned by recent attempts to redefine the status of countries with special needs. It would be important to reconcile the strategic document with the mandate emanating from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in that regard.

57. Although Member States benefited greatly from regional commissions, their approaches could sometimes be excessively traditional. He asked whether the regional commissions had considered revamping their methods to offer Member States more innovative solutions to the problems that they faced.

58. **Mr. Engels** (Observer for the Netherlands) asked the representatives of UNDP and UNICEF what improvements could be made to the system-wide strategic document to boost inter-agency cooperation in support of concrete results at the national level.

59. **Ms. Luna** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) asked how ECLAC was working with Member States to help them achieve the 2030 Agenda.

60. **Ms. Mendoza Elguea** (Mexico) said that the regional commissions played a crucial role in promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. She requested more details on the work done at the regional level by the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, especially the work of ECLAC.

61. **Mr. Higuchi** (Japan) asked the panellists what time frame was envisaged for the integration of the back offices of United Nations country teams and whether there were likely to be bottlenecks that impeded the process.

62. **Ms. Werdermann** (Germany) said that various concerns about gaps and duplication of work had not been addressed in the system-wide strategic document. She requested further details about the follow-up process and time frame for updating the document.

63. **Ms. Leyva Regueira** (Observer for Cuba) said that the system-wide strategic document should not reinterpret or duplicate the mandate emanating from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The document should instead be used to: identify thematic gaps in capacity within the development system and ways to solve them; enhance the functions of the development system to meet countries' increasingly diverse needs through a comprehensive, flexible and inclusive approach; and examine and replicate the strengths of United Nations development system functions and activities.

64. A key method for replicating success was to exchange experiences. In the light of the outstanding support that Cuba had received from the United Nations development system and the regional commissions during the recent hurricane season, she asked the Executive Secretary of ECLAC how the experience of the regional commissions could feed into the final version of the system-wide strategic document.

65. **Ms. Pindera** (Canada), emphasizing the importance of building monitoring and evaluation capacities on the ground, requested the panellists' opinions on the proposal by the Secretary-General to establish an independent system-wide evaluation unit. It would be particularly interesting to learn of cases in which there were interlinkages in the monitoring and evaluation efforts of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

66. Although the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding nexus reinforced efforts by United Nations entities to prevent crises and conflicts, it could sometimes create additional challenges. She requested further information on the difficulties faced in implementing strategic plans simultaneously across all three dimensions of the nexus.

67. **Ms. Mafole** (South Africa) said that under the Secretary-General's proposals, some Member States would be recategorized at a higher income status and fewer resources would therefore be allocated to United Nations operational activities in that country. She asked whether consultations could be arranged for those Member States affected and measures taken to help them adapt to the sudden drop in resources. Similarly, she asked whether UNDP intended to ensure that developing countries not categorized as vulnerable would continue to be supported at the appropriate level. Lastly, she requested more information on the role of the Economic Commission for Africa in the reform process.

68. **Mr. Alessawi** (Iraq) said that the repositioning of the United Nations development system required an integrated approach. His delegation was concerned about the financial impact of some of the proposed initiatives, such as the separation of the functions of the resident coordinator and the UNDP resident representative. Any new vision for the reorganization of the United Nations development system should strengthen the role of the regional commissions in supporting development efforts at the regional level.

69. Each country had particular sustainable development needs that could be met through active cooperation with the United Nations country teams. There were also diverse transnational development issues, such as climate change, water, migration and trade, that could not be properly addressed within a purely national framework. Successful solutions to those issues were contingent on cooperation between the States of the region through the regional commissions. The repositioning process should acknowledge the importance of those issues and the role played by the regional commissions, particularly the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in addressing them.

70. His delegation supported the proposal for the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group and the regional coordination mechanisms to hold meetings jointly or back to back, with agendas informing one another; for those entities to be serviced by a common secretariat; and for the strengthening of the participation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the regional coordination mechanism. However, his delegation had questions regarding the common secretariat, such as what its methods of work would be and whether it would require additional resources. In addition, he asked why the existing structure within the regional economic and social commissions could not be leveraged to support the common secretariat.

71. **Ms. Crabtree** (Turkey) asked how reform of the United Nations development system would affect the regional offices of United Nations agencies in the medium and long term.

72. **Mr. Steiner** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women were working together to translate the common chapter into operational guidelines and were looking into opportunities for joint planning, monitoring, communication and resource mobilization. The areas of collaborative advantage identified in the common chapter were underpinned by indicators and targets. UNDP and others had fed into the system-wide strategic document, with a view to achieving common outcomes. The fact that each fund, programme or specialized agency had a distinct mandate did not mean they should operate in silos on the ground; indeed, it was virtually impossible to do so.

73. The United Nations produced almost identical Humanitarian Response Plans year after year and had even had to invent the term "protracted crisis" to describe the situation in some areas, which should give both the Organization and Member States pause for thought. When missions were drawn down, the number of personnel shrank drastically almost overnight, which jeopardized the gains made in the affected country.

74. The funds, programmes and specialized agencies had launched dozens of mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy missions. He welcomed the establishment of the Joint Policy Fund to Advance the 2030 Agenda through Integrated Policy and the Spotlight Initiative as a positive step.

75. Back-office functions offered a great deal of potential for efficiency gains. UNDP already provided payroll services for some 17,000 staff. However, as the market for back-office services was not competitive, the opportunity for economies of scale was limited.

76. **Mr. Ryder** (Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the establishment of common premises and back-office functions would result in efficiency gains. However, the payroll and procurement processes and human resources policies of each entity would need to be harmonized.

77. In answer to the question about whether to grant resident coordinators the authority to approve work plans, he said that if ILO removed management lines with staff in the field, it would no longer be accountable in the same way for its programmes. ILO needed to look carefully at arrangements on the ground to ensure that it was promoting greater cohesion without forgoing its responsibilities.

78. System-wide evaluations could be valuable but should complement, rather than duplicate, the types of evaluations already carried out by United Nations entities. ILO had invested heavily in evaluation and oversight mechanisms in recent years, which had greatly improved the quality of its work. The United Nations system was getting better at working together to achieve collective outcomes. Partnerships enabled entities to look at common issues from different institutional perspectives and add value; however, entities could not go beyond their individual mandates.

79. In terms of innovation, ILO was conducting a major business process review to reduce the cost of internal processes. Anything that funds, programmes and specialized agencies could do to reduce administrative complexity, bureaucratic overload and excessive transaction costs would be universally beneficial.

80. **Ms. Fore** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the co-location of United Nations entities could be extremely beneficial, although it was not always the best solution. The creation of a joint executive board was a decision for Member States.

81. The funds, programmes and specialized agencies could do more to simplify planning. They should carry out joint risk and country analysis, needs assessments, real-time monitoring and reporting. They should also work together in areas such as human resources and information and communications technology. The focus should be on results, not processes. She expected the United Nations Development Group to come up with some practical solutions, including on the issue of gender equality.

82. The common chapter identified six areas of collaborative advantage. In 2018 UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women should pick one or two of those areas and deliver a couple of specific outcomes. They should also work together beyond the common chapter.

83. UNICEF had already identified two common themes under the system-wide strategic document: climate change and data.

84. The majority of the Fund's resources went to vulnerable countries, but as many such countries still did not have sufficient resources there was a need to work with other partners. The allocation of resources was based not only on the income status of States but also on data on children, which ensured that the needs of each country were taken into account.

85. Inter-agency cooperation was most effective when the entities balanced out one another's strengths and weaknesses. For instance, an entity with strong intellectual capital but no in-country staff might work well with an entity with a strong presence on the ground.

86. A number of programmes had been developed in the context of the development-humanitarian-peacebuilding continuum. In South Sudan, for instance, in addition to receiving food aid, the mothers of malnourished children were given seeds and tools to help them to become self-sufficient.

87. **Mr. Glemarec** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that there was unprecedented eagerness within the United Nations to work together in the field of innovation. UN-Women had benefited greatly from the expertise of other United Nations entities. For instance, it had worked with WFP to develop systems for providing cash transfers to women refugees and to ensure access to markets for women farmers. UN-Women had no blockchain technology experts, but it was able to make use of such technology through cooperation with other United Nations entities.

88. The common chapter would be implemented through global thematic programmes, such as the Spotlight Initiative, and regional programmes, such as the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. The main barrier to the implementation of the common chapter was funding. The Spotlight Initiative had been made possible thanks to a pledge of €500 million from the European Union. It remained to be seen whether the

United Nations system would be able to move as quickly on issues such as maternal and neonatal health.

89. There was a need to ensure that entities had incentives to work together. At present, it was a zero-sum game, whereby one agency receiving funding meant that another received none. UN-Women was striving to streamline its processes. For instance, it was working to link up its systems with the Organization's central database, which would mean that information entered by UNICEF staff would immediately be visible to all other entities.

90. With regard to the question of common premises, in October 2017 he had visited the Solomon Islands, where UN-Women was running a project that was making a real difference. UN-Women would not be able to have a presence in the Solomon Islands if it were not for the joint office managed by UNDP.

91. **Mr. Alakbarov** (Director of the Programme Division of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that UNFPA was not wedded to any particular governance and accountability mechanism. However, the mechanisms currently in place had been developed over decades with a view to creating linkages between budgets and results, ensuring national ownership and providing a clear audit trail for donors. They could be simplified, but that must not be allowed to affect the efforts of UNFPA to achieve its three transformative goals.

92. The Istanbul office of UNFPA had been co-located with that of UNDP. The office was working with UNICEF and UN-Women to provide technical assistance and policy advice in the region. It was also working with the Economic Commission for Europe on policy development and analysis. UNFPA had recently changed its business model and had adapted its country presence to ensure that country offices were larger where needs were greatest. The revised business model was very much in line with the Secretary-General's reform process.

93. **Ms. Bárcena** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); and current Coordinator of the Regional Commissions) said that the regional forums on sustainable development were an opportunity for Member States to learn about common methodologies for incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into national plans. The resident coordinators and representatives of the private sector also took part in the forums, which were an important platform for peer learning.

94. Small island developing States faced two main issues: poor connectivity and vulnerability to natural disasters. In the Caribbean, ECLAC was examining the possibility of a debt swap initiative, whereby a small portion of the region's debt would be transformed to create a resilience fund. ECLAC and UNDP must work together to develop a single methodology for responding to hurricanes. ECLAC had expertise in assessing the economic and social damage caused by a hurricane, while UNDP focused on post-disaster needs assessment.

95. ECLAC was working to address tax evasion. In Latin America and the Caribbean, tax evasion amounted to approximately 6 per cent of regional gross domestic product; that money should be going towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

96. ECLAC also did a great deal of work at the subregional level. In Central America, for instance, ECLAC was active in areas such as electrification and climate change. She recalled that ECLAC had been behind the establishment of the Central American Common Market. There was a need to see how subregional offices could work better together.

97. While the regional commissions were part of the United Nations development system, they were also part of the Secretariat. As such, the regional commissions were already engaged in implementing the global service delivery model. She called for the regional commissions to be given a greater voice.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 28 February 2018, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Vice-President) ..... (Belgium)

Contents

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*)

Panel discussion: "Revitalizing the United Nations development system's funding architecture in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: towards a compact"

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (*continued*)

General discussion

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/72/124–E/2018/3, A/72/684–E/2018/7 and A/72/63–E/2018/8)

1. **The Deputy Secretary-General**, delivering the keynote address, said that the United Nations development system's funding base was not fit to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite increases in overall volumes over the previous 15 years, improving people's lives around the world, earmarked contributions had grown six times faster than core contributions, which currently made up only 22 per cent of total contributions and had declined by 40 per cent since 2002. In other words, close to 80 cents of every development dollar were subject to strict earmarking, which had become ever more specific, with 91 per cent of all non-core funding going to single-entity projects. As a result, the development system had become more dependent on the fluctuations of project-related resources, less flexible to respond to changing national needs and much more prone to needless bureaucratic battling for funds. That approach had high transaction costs for the system, which often lost the ability to maintain a long-term strategic focus on a country's key development challenges and priorities. As the substantive focus and destination of funds were determined by those providing the resources, collective accountability to governing bodies was diluted, ultimately affecting the countries and people served by the Organization the most.

2. As the Secretary-General had said, a fragmented funding base delivered fragmented results. Member States had recognized that fact in the 2016 resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, calling for improvements in the level, predictability and flexibility of the system's funding base. In response, the Secretary-General had proposed a funding compact between the United Nations system and Member States in order to bring about those improvements, with the system, in turn, guaranteeing increased transparency and accountability for spending and system-wide results.

3. A pragmatic approach had been taken to designing the compact and its principles were well captured in existing resolutions. However, concrete commitments, specific targets and action at the country level would now be required. The compact for action was a commitment to a series of measures that would dramatically improve the transparency and accountability of the resources entrusted for system-wide activities.

4. The requests being made under the compact included specific targets covering three dimensions. First, a healthier percentage of core budget to individual entities should be ensured across the system. Core funding allowed entities to be more effective, flexible and strategic partners to countries, and more collaborative members of the new generation of United Nations country teams.

5. Second, a new impetus should be given to pooled funding in order to improve the quality of earmarked funds. Immediate action on pooled funding was proposed through two specific inter-agency funds, the Joint Policy Fund to Advance the 2030 Agenda through Integrated Policy, capitalized at $290 million, and an increase in resources for the Peacebuilding Fund, in addition to a commitment to double the current share of pooled funding from 8 per cent to 16 per cent. Pooled funds delivered proven results by incentivizing United Nations collaboration, ensuring better alignment to national priorities and reducing transaction costs.

6. Third, the core capacities of the resident coordinator system should be funded through assessed contributions, to ensure predictability and ownership across the membership. That would be a logical step as the Organization repositioned sustainable development at the heart of its work.

7. The development coordination function was known to be vastly underfunded. In many countries, resident coordinators lacked the basic staffing capacities to credibly lead the Organization's sustainable development activities in support of countries. That structural gap must be addressed. The total cost for a more robust coordination function, estimated at $255 million — a mere 1 per cent of the annual contribution to operational activities for development — would return huge dividends in terms of value for money and results for people.

8. The ambition of the 2030 Agenda could not be matched by a system designed to respond to the needs of the past. The fundamental elements and targets of the funding compact must be defined in order to lay the groundwork for a regular funding dialogue, through which progress could be reviewed and the compact

adjusted over time. More than any other proposal, the funding compact embodied the collective responsibility to reposition the United Nations development system, challenging Member States and the system to review their approaches to funding. A strong commitment from all involved would make it possible to implement the 2030 Agenda on schedule.

Panel discussion: "Revitalizing the United Nations development system's funding architecture in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: towards a compact"

9. **The President** asked whether the Secretary-General's proposal to increase assessed contributions would improve the predictability of the development system.

10. **Mr. Asmal** (Director of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Partnerships in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa), panellist, said that any postponement of the funding dialogue proposed by the Secretary-General would only lead to further complications. The realization of the Sustainable Development Goals would bring about tangible improvements but the cost of failing to achieve them would be dire. It must also be acknowledged however that, owing to historical and present injustices, not all countries could contribute equally to sustainable development efforts. External support was therefore a vital part of the means of implementation.

11. For African countries, the synergies between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union should be taken into consideration. Moreover, nefarious business practices affecting developing countries, including illegal financial flows, must be denounced, as they diverted vital resources from government efforts to improve the lot of their citizens.

12. The proposed funding dialogue should draw attention to the trend of substituting investments with foreign aid; both sources of funding were equally necessary and must be pursued. The dialogue should also take place as soon as possible and include States and non-State actors alike. While the assessed contributions of States were important, non-State actors should share in the responsibility to make the world a better place.

13. **The President** enquired about the implications of the Secretary-General's proposal to double inter-agency pooled funds and increase entity-specific thematic funds.

14. **Mr. Rahman** (Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh), panellist, said that the Secretary-General's proposal to double the contribution to inter-agency pooled funds and to scale up entity-specific thematic funds would enable agencies to expand their programmatic support to countries on a multi-year basis, thereby enhancing inter-agency collaboration.

15. **The Secretary-General** had made a strong business case for his repositioning initiative. The rise in earmarked funding and the concomitant decline in core funding were having a negative impact on the ground. The stable, predictable, sustainable and flexible funding required to make the United Nations development system dynamic and fit for purpose must remain at the heart of the repositioning process.

16. The continued decline of core contributions adversely affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the system's functions, as core funding provided more flexibility to respond to country needs. Donors must therefore be given incentives to shift from highly earmarked funding to more flexible funding, especially core funding. Moreover, strong provisions for flexible and predictable non-core resources should be put in place, as those resources could strengthen coherence and coordination, incentivize inter-agency collaboration and widen the donor base.

17. While contributions from non-traditional donors could be leveraged, pooled and thematic funds could also be drawn upon in support of larger projects and programmes on any 2030 Agenda-related theme, as United Nations agencies had done in addressing the refugee problem in his country.

18. The proposed resident coordinator system could contribute to enhancing knowledge of funding mechanisms among stakeholders. The system must be managed in an efficient and transparent manner, ensuring full accountability to States and other contributors.

19. Funding the United Nations development system must be aligned with the national development priorities and strategies of programme countries in order to reflect national ownership. United Nations development system expenditures should also adopt a balanced approach to the three dimensions of sustainable development.

20. Lastly, the proposed pooled funding could enable agencies to overcome their capacity constraints and focus on major projects on a predictable, multi-year basis. Politics as usual must be transcended in the interest of seizing the important opportunity presented

by the ongoing reform process, particularly at a time when developing countries were in greater need than ever of the United Nations development system.

21. **The President** enquired about the response to the Secretary-General's proposals to fund the resident coordinator system and to create a discretionary integration fund of $270,000 per resident coordinator office.

22. **Mr. Gomez** (Deputy Director General of the United Nations Policy Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden), panellist, said that the resident coordinator system should be funded through assessed contributions as it was a core element of United Nations operations. Flexible, high-quality funding would enable the resident coordinator offices, which presently operated on relatively modest amounts, to be more responsive to country needs and development plans.

23. His Government agreed with the Deputy Secretary-General's account of the flaws in the current financing system. In order to create incentives for countries to provide good-quality and predictable funding for the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations development system and its individual agencies must rebuild trust with Member States by enhancing the system's capacity to support companies to deliver results on the ground. The system would need results-based, transparent and accountable management and harmonized cost-recovery models for its funds and programmes; the latter would encourage non-earmarked funding. The Organization must take measures that would demonstrate its willingness to be more cost-effective and ensure improved visibility of the resources provided.

24. **Mr. Paust** (Germany) said that it would not be easy to persuade the relevant stakeholders in his Government of the merits of core funding, given that they associated such aspects as close control or better visibility with earmarked funding. The right arguments must therefore be found and articulated. As part of that effort, United Nations system entities should provide examples of the negative practical repercussions of being bound by too much earmarking, thereby illustrating the type of problems posed by non-core funding. The Deputy Secretary-General and the heads of United Nations agencies should also undertake outreach to donor countries to convince Governments of the utility of the Secretary-General's proposed approach.

25. **Mr. Gad** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the question of financing the United Nations development system was a cornerstone of the reform efforts. He agreed that a failure to fund the system well, and therefore to implement the 2030 Agenda, would be a costly missed opportunity.

26. Stability, predictability and sustainability of funding were key to supporting the poverty eradication efforts at the heart of the United Nations development system's mandate. Funding should be aligned with national priorities, reflect national ownership and be directed towards underfunded priority areas in developing countries. Nevertheless, the reality of declining core contributions adversely affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. That trend must be reversed, and the quality of non-core contributions should be enhanced and aligned with the priorities of developing countries. In that connection, the proposal on pooled funding should be considered as an alternative to strict earmarking and as complementing core contributions, which were the bedrock of the United Nations development system.

27. Pooled funds must be considered with a keen eye on the mandate emanating from paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, especially in the relevant contexts across development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts. When considering the way forward, strengthening funding mechanisms should not place any additional financial burden on developing countries. The modalities and time frame of the funding dialogue proposed by the Secretary-General must be defined clearly. More information would be welcome on the dialogue and on how pooled funds could complement core contributions.

28. **Mr. Chang** (United States of America) reiterated his delegation's position, expressed in other forums, that the surest way to attract resources was to provide evidence that programmes were driven by results and that the funds used met high accountability and transparency standards and matched the comparative advantages of organizations. Indeed, building trust by demonstrating results was foundational to increasing the Organization's fitness for purpose and tangibly embracing enhanced efficiency, especially within existing resources. It therefore remained crucial to mobilize all types of resources, including domestic resources, and to stress the importance of human rights and good governance in fostering truly sustainable development. He asked the Deputy Secretary-General and the panellists how the existing best practices of United Nations funds and programmes might be drawn upon to show results and to mobilize greater investment in the United Nations development system.

29. **Ms. Steiger** (Observer for Switzerland) said that a well-funded, independent and strong resident coordinator system was crucial to the successful implementation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). While it made sense to finance the system through assessed contributions, significant risks and challenges would persist even if management reforms were implemented, and the resident coordinator budget would remain under political pressure. Development was a long-term investment that would yield results over time, requiring longer-term engagement and sustainable structures.

30. It was necessary to ensure predictability of funding and formulate a risk-mitigation strategy that considered the need for burden sharing among Member States. A fixed fraction of the cost recovery could be applied to non-core contributions, collected by the implementing agencies and reallocated to the resident coordinator system. Programme countries could also provide a flat annual contribution when able to do so. Continuing and improving the cost-sharing agreements could result in greater buy-in to the resident coordinator system by other agencies and entities. Her delegation would be interested to hear from agency representatives what incentives their agencies were considering. She would also welcome more information on how donor countries that had shifted from earmarked to non-earmarked funding had been encouraged to do so.

31. **Mr. Bin Momen** (Observer for Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that paragraphs 146 and 147 of the report of the Secretary-General on the repositioning of the United Nations development system (A/72/684–E/2018/7) underlined the need to enhance core funding but contained no specific recommendation on enhancing United Nations support for the least developed countries, as called for in paragraph 40 of General Assembly resolution 71/243. The decline in United Nations development system expenditures on least developed countries was particularly alarming and was proceeding apace, despite calls by the General Assembly and the Council to reverse the trend.

32. A study by the Committee for Development Policy had demonstrated that most United Nations development system entities lacked operational guidelines with clear budgetary allocations or targets, resulting in unpredictable resource flows to least developed countries. For their part, the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had already decided to allocate a minimum of 60 per cent of their support to least developed countries. He enquired how a quantifiable minimum target for resource allocation to least developed countries by the United Nations development system could be guaranteed.

33. **Mr. Zahir** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that funding was a key element of the discussion on the repositioning of the United Nations development system, given that insufficient funding would imperil the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He asked the panellists to share their views on the Secretary-General's proposal to fund the resident coordinator system through assessed contributions, and on the format for the assessments. The Alliance strongly supported the use of pooled funds to finance development activities. He also asked the panellists to share their views on how the proposed pooling of funds across the development-humanitarian-peacebuilding continuum would be operationalized, managed and executed, bearing in mind the nexus articulated in General Assembly resolution 71/243. Lastly, he wondered how the United Nations development system would go about securing funding for itself.

34. **Mr. Alami** (Morocco) said that the United Nations development system needed colossal financial reinforcements to implement the 2030 Agenda and that reform of existing financing mechanisms would be a central element of the system's repositioning. Developing countries, particularly African countries, required predictable and flexible funding. He enquired how a balance might be struck between development and humanitarian funding.

35. **Ms. Kenner** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation welcomed the acknowledgement that not all non-core funding was created equal. She wondered what more could be done within the funding compact to avoid the traditional pitting of core funding against non-core funding, instead reflecting the varying quality of types of the latter. Moreover, given the need for Member State ownership of the entire compact, she requested clarification on how the perspective of other investors in the system could be adequately reflected.

36. **Ms. Lagrange** (France) said that her Government was prepared to examine the Secretary-General's proposal on financing the resident coordinator system. However, she would like to know how the integrity of the system would be guaranteed and how the amount of resources to be allocated to it would be handled in the Fifth Committee.

37. **Ms. Fladby** (Norway) said that the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a funding compact with Member States would provide an opportunity to change a funding pattern that all agreed was unfavourable to

development. However, it was important to recognize that building the United Nations that Member States wanted would place demands on the entire membership, requiring each country to reflect on how to improve upon present funding methods.

38. Norway consistently made robust core, thematic and inter-agency pooled contributions and was willing to do better, but other Member States in a position to do so would have to scale up their multilateral funding in order to meet the targets proposed by the Secretary-General. Moreover, new donors, including global funds and other non-State actors, should be recruited. Commitments must be made more concrete so that they could be monitored clearly. The visibility of commitments was particularly important for countries like Norway, whose core contributions to global inter-agency funds were significant but sometimes went unrecognized because they were not made at the country level. Consideration should also be given to discussing commitments that demonstrated improved common resources and cost efficiencies at the country level.

39. **Ms. Clifford** (Observer for Australia) said that her country was very supportive of the Secretary-General's reform processes and of the funding compact initiative in particular. She requested additional information on how the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) was thinking collectively about the potential for financing in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, sharing proven financing mechanisms, providing staff with leadership and addressing key partners that ranged from the World Bank to private citizens and pension funds. She also enquired how each member of UNDG planned to mobilize resources in support of the funding compact and align in-country projects to UNDAFs or the in-country budget.

40. **Mr. Momeni** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the numerous challenges faced by the United Nations development system indicated that its current financial model must be replaced with a sustainable model that allowed the system to perform its core function of enabling Member States to implement their development priorities. He wondered how the United Nations development system could ensure support for Member States affected by the existing funding gap, and what new strategy could be adopted to reduce dependency on earmarked funding and establish a sustainable financing mechanism.

41. **Ms. Chen** Hongying (China) said that China believed that adequate and predictable funding was vital to implementing the 2030 Agenda. To that end, developed countries should honour their official development assistance commitments in earnest. China supported deeper collaboration with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to achieve a win-win result. The funding compact should be based on extensive consensus and formulated in a manner that fully respected the will of Member States.

42. **Ms. Fitzmaurice Gray** (Ireland) said that Ireland firmly believed in the importance of core funding delivered as early in the funding cycle as possible. She wondered how the panellists might envisage attracting and encouraging the participation of non-traditional donors. She would also welcome more information on how the existing humanitarian, country-based pooled funds would dovetail with the new proposed country-level funds.

43. **Mr. Gomez** (Deputy Director General of the United Nations Policy Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden) said that the experience of Sweden with multi-partner trust funds had been positive, notably in Somalia, whose 2017 drought had been addressed efficiently. Other instances of good practices abounded, as did examples of the adverse repercussions of earmarked resources.

44. A more sophisticated approach to non-core funding was needed. Least developed countries were most dependent on core funding, particularly in the aftermath of a crisis. Apart from other measures to enhance non-earmarked support, multi-year agreements should be discussed. Investments made through the United Nations development system were only half the story, as host country Governments invested a great deal in development plans whose efficiency relied on core funding.

45. Sweden fully endorsed the proposal to fund the resident coordinator system through assessed contributions but acknowledged that other financing would be necessary, given the system's wide variety of functions. His department lacked the leverage needed to place political pressure on the Ministry of Finance. More advocacy in favour of core funding was need from civil society groups or parliamentary voices.

46. **Mr. Rahman** (Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh) said that positive experiences during country visits and evidence of economic results, supplied through an efficient information management system and regular reports from Member States, could serve as incentives for donors and development partners. In Bangladesh, a local consultative group co-chaired by the United States arranged periodic forums to demonstrate results on the ground and highlight challenges and opportunities.

47. The shift from competition to collaboration between United Nations agencies and their use of comparative advantages to produce results on the ground, to the benefit of the country in question, constituted a best practice. In that connection, the Central Emergency Response Fund of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs illustrated the optimal use of pooled resources to meet humanitarian needs.

48. **Mr. Asmal** (Director of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Partnerships in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa) said that the consensus on the need for ownership and increased public diplomacy and visibility in many areas was heartening. With the old system not yet dead and the new one not yet born, there was an opportunity to shape practices and policies in a manner that would improve the lives of ordinary people, especially in Africa. The profound changes in the geopolitical system obliged non-traditional donors to respond to the needs of an ever wider human family, not as an act of charity but as one of necessity.

49. **The Deputy Secretary-General** said that good system-wide practices existed and results were reported on; however, harmonizing data sets and reporting on collective results would make those results more visible to donors. Independent evaluation of specific agencies could also be considered. It would be necessary to alter the current message being relayed to Governments regarding the value of investments in development and to extend outreach to government officials with a say in budget-related decisions. In that regard, she would welcome assistance from government representatives in formulating messages that would be received well. Lastly, broadening the base for accountability would help with advocacy for more resources.

50. **Mr. Hendra** (Co-Chair of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review coordinating team), responding to a question posed at an earlier meeting regarding the possibility that resident coordinator offices might be overloaded by being designated as one-stop-shop for partnerships (see E/2018/SR.10, para. 70), said that consultations with Member States and civil society had revealed an expectation that the resident coordinator system should play a stronger role in leveraging partnerships. Moreover, General Assembly resolution 71/243 had set out a clear role for the United Nations development system in leveraging partnerships, which were a decisive element in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The one-stop-shop approach was not an attempt to centralize partnership but instead aimed to provide a point of first contact for external partners wishing to engage with the United Nations on a broader level. The resident coordinator system could help liaise between potential partners and key government and United Nations country team officials. It would then be up to the agencies, funds and programmes to implement the actual partnerships.

51. **Mr. Hanif** (Co-Chair of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review coordinating team), responding to questions posed at an earlier meeting regarding basic due diligence criteria (see E/2018/SR.10, paras. 67 and 74), said that partnerships must adhere to United Nations values and make meaningful contributions to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretary-General had requested UNDG, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Global Compact to launch a system-wide consultation to establish criteria according to which partnerships would be held responsible. However, entities should be given room to contribute their own ideas about partnerships. The 10 principles of the Global Compact constituted the bare minimum by which partnerships must abide; though not agreed at the intergovernmental level, the principles had been drawn from intergovernmental agreements. The criteria to be established would have to comply with those agreements as well.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to the policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/72/124–E/2018/3, A/72/684–E/2018/7 and A/73/63–E/2018/8)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (*continued*) (E/2017/34/Rev.1, E/2018/36 and E/2018/65)

General discussion

52. **The President** invited the Council to begin its general discussion of agenda item 7 as a whole.

53. **Mr. Edrees** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions remained the highest priority and the overarching objective of the United Nations development system. The repositioning of the system should fully respect

national sovereignty, ownership and leadership while taking different levels of development into account.

54. Regarding the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's reports (A/72/124–E/2018/3 and A/72/684–E/2018/7), the Group believed that the configuration of United Nations country teams should be determined in full consultation and agreement with national Governments. Country teams should continue to have a strong presence in the most vulnerable countries and to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in areas where the United Nations development system lacked capacity and resources. The mechanism whereby non-resident United Nations entities supported and engaged with programme countries needed to be developed and shared with Member States. Their Government should also be actively involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of UNDAFs.

55. With regard to the resident coordinator system, the Group believed that a reinvigorated system must maintain its development focus. Resident coordinators should implement UNDAFs, under national leadership and ownership, with a developmental and non-politicized approach. The hiring process should be strengthened to ensure that resident coordinators were sustainable development professionals and that balanced geographical representation and gender parity were maintained. Paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution 71/243 provided the guiding framework regarding the competencies of resident coordinators for improved coordination between development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts. There could be no "one-size-fits-all" approach to that issue. Furthermore, the funding of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system should not place any financial burden on developing countries.

56. The proposed revamping of the regional approach of the United Nations development system needed to be presented in greater detail. The regional approach should also avoid using a "one-size-fits-all" model and ensure that proposals reflected the specificities of each region. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs needed to play a bigger role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by providing policy guidance at the regional level.

57. Although the Group supported efforts to improve the transparency, accountability and oversight of the United Nations development system, the proposed creation of a joint executive board of the New York-based funds and programmes should be discussed in the context of, rather than alongside, the review of General Assembly resolution 68/1. The initiation of parallel processes would be inefficient in that regard.

58. Noting with concern the continuing decline of core contributions to the United Nations development system, the Group called for greater flexibility of non-core contributions and funding practices and alignment with the priorities of developing countries. Pooled funds offered an alternative to strict earmarking and would complement core contributions. At the same time, more robust funding mechanisms should not place a financial burden on developing countries. The Group looked forward to engaging in the funding dialogue that had been proposed by the Secretary-General.

59. Given the need to ensure that partnerships were aligned with the national priorities of programme countries, the Group stressed that Governments had a crucial role to play in forging partnerships at the country level. In that context, the proposal to turn resident coordinator offices into country-level hubs for system-wide partnership-building went beyond the mandate of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Ultimately, any new standards implemented within the United Nations development system should be the outcome of intergovernmental processes and be adopted by Member States.

60. As the United Nations system-wide strategic document (A/72/684–E/2018/7, annex) overlapped with the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/684–E/2018/7), the Group preferred to engage in the repositioning process on the basis of the latter. Furthermore, the proposal to consider the strategic document as a "living document" created a parallel track to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and went beyond the mandate provided for in General Assembly resolution 71/243.

61. Lastly, in accordance with paragraph 24 of the above resolution, the linkages between development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts should be limited to enhancing coordination among those three areas at the national level within the specific context of countries facing humanitarian emergencies and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

62. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the current process to reposition the United Nations development system should improve coordination and integration at the global, regional and national levels. CELAC recognized the steps taken by the Secretary-General to ensure a coherent repositioning process in that regard. A flexible approach to repositioning the United Nations development system must address the needs of each

country and region, eschewing a "one-size-fits-all" approach, and take the specific characteristics of each regional economic commission into account. CELAC would ensure that the mandate of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was protected and that its crucial role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was recognized in the new structure that would emerge from the repositioning process.

63. CELAC welcomed the discussion on the proposals to align the physical presence of the United Nations development system with national needs and priorities, taking into account the multidimensional demands of the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed goals, as reflected in UNDAFs or equivalent planning frameworks. In that regard, CELAC supported the intention to adopt flexible and cost-effective models for the field presence of the United Nations development system, based on the needs and priorities of each country.

64. CELAC supported the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. Resident coordinators had a central role to play, working with United Nations country teams under the leadership of Governments, in coordinating the Organization's operational activities for development at the country level. The repositioning of the United Nations development system should enable resident coordinators and their offices to better respond to the priorities and needs of each developing country.

65. The United Nations development system must continue allocating resources for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in developing countries. At the same time, CELAC supported efforts to reach those left furthest behind first while ensuring that the universal, indivisible and inclusive nature of the 2030 Agenda was taken into account and that a coherent approach was adopted to address the crossing-cutting elements of the Goals and targets.

66. CELAC welcomed the idea of a funding compact to address the decline of core contributions and the growing imbalance between core and non-core resources. The proposals to strengthen inter-agency pooled funds and agency-specific thematic funds were positive options that deserved to be further explored. However, partnerships were also crucial for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. More partnership initiatives, as a complement to, not a substitute for North-South cooperation, would enable the reform of the development system to address the diverse needs of developing countries.

67. **Ms. Angelova** (Observer for Bulgaria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the reform of the United Nations development system was urgently needed to make it efficient, effective, integrated and accountable, and capable of supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It was also time to reform the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to make it results-oriented, collaborative and focused on areas of comparative advantage, enabling it to focus on its areas of expertise while avoiding duplication. All individual entities within the United Nations development system were expected to align their strategic planning processes and activities with the outcome of the reform discussions once approved by Member States.

68. Impartial, independent and empowered resident coordinators leading integrated and results-driven country teams should be at the core of a more efficient and effective development system. Resident coordinators should have authority over resources that incentivized collaboration and the ability to draw on the expertise and assets of the entire system. Resident coordinators who were also humanitarian coordinators should be experts in both development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. United Nations country teams should be restructured to achieve greater impact on the ground and to improve coordination with entities that were not part of the United Nations development system. The Secretary-General's objective to increase the proportion of common premises to 50 per cent of all United Nations offices and logistical spaces by 2021 was welcome. UNDAFs should become the most important national planning instruments in support of the 2030 Agenda.

69. Funding of the United Nations development system needed to be modernized to allow for greater flexibility and to ensure that it had predictable funding. Incentives were needed to broaden and diversify the contributor base, improve funding volume and predictability and strike a balance between core and non-core resources. A funding compact should have the commitment of both the United Nations development system and Member States, and make clear what investors in the system would receive in return. The funding compact should promote inter-agency funding mechanisms and well-designed thematic and pooled funding that incentivized collaboration among entities within the United Nations development system. The funding compact should also encompass private, public, national and international means of implementation and partnerships. Non-concessional financing and closer cooperation with international financial institutions

should be considered as being a part of the overall funding package.

70. A stronger link was needed between the United Nations development system and vertical funds such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization. Greater use should be made of well-designed pooled funds, thematic funds, the Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda and discretionary integration funds as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/72/684–E/2018/7). Duplication of existing funding instruments should be avoided and greater transparency with respect to financing was desirable. It would also be helpful if the efficiency gains of the proposed approach could be quantified and if more information could be provided regarding the areas in which the United Nations would be less active owing to a lack of comparative advantages.

71. Results-based management, system-wide results, accountability and transparency were essential to building a relationship based on trust with Member States and to the discussion of the proposed funding compact. The proposal to establish an independent system-wide evaluation unit that complemented existing structures was welcome. System-wide compliance with the standard established by the International Aid Transparency Initiative and greater external scrutiny of the impact and effectiveness of the United Nations development system programming were also needed.

72. The proposal regarding the working methods of executive boards needed to be improved. The European Union was willing to consider granting the joint meeting of the Executive Boards legislative authority to increase its impact and value, and was open to discussing the Secretary-General's proposal on the merger of the New York-based funds and programmes as a long-term possibility.

73. Regarding the Secretary-General's proposals for an innovative approach to partnerships, the proposed common standards and criteria should protect United Nations values and objectives without hindering greater and more constructive engagement with external partners.

74. The European Union appreciated the attempt to produce a system-wide strategic document that would evolve alongside the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the reform processes. The document should specify the comparative and collaborative advantages of the various agencies, funds and programmes. United Nations development system entities should commit to carrying out the recommendations set out for each of the four guiding principles in the document.

75. Future versions of the system-wide document should clearly demonstrate areas in which the United Nations had a comparative advantage and those in which it did not and in which it would do less in the future. The document should also explain how system overlaps would be addressed and how flagship initiatives would percolate through the rest of the development system. More information was also needed regarding how the United Nations development system would engage with the private sector while keeping planned system-wide evaluations informed. Clarification was also needed of the responsibility of resident coordinators for integrated planning to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level, and the way entities within the United Nations development system would ensure coherence between the system-wide strategic document and their own strategic plans.

76. **Mr. Ten-Pow** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the Secretary-General's recommendations on repositioning the United Nations development system needed to address issues of specific concern to middle-income small island developing States. Currently, many members of the Community were served through multi-country offices under a single UNDAF, despite having different national development priorities. Those multi-country offices suffered from budget constraints while facing higher operating costs and were often unable to adequately respond to requests for assistance, leaving many Community members underserved.

77. Special attention should therefore be paid to the challenges associated with the system of multi-country offices. Member States should be fully involved in designing that new system, and in restructuring the systems for resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, in order to better meet the specific needs of CARICOM member States. The adjustments to be considered for a multi-country office should include adequate time for consultation with multiple Governments and for the preparation of UNDAFs. Furthermore, each country should have its own UNDAF so that all CARICOM countries could meet the requirements of an integrated programme for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Resident coordinator offices should have the capacity to manage the full range of programmes that would be implemented in each country.

78. Predictable core resources were required to facilitate the response of funds, agencies and programmes to the needs of middle-income countries. It was unclear how pooled funds would be distributed across multi-country offices, which often had different and changing priorities across the spectrum of

humanitarian and development needs. When a single budget or a pooled fund was set aside for both humanitarian emergencies and development programmes, it was likely that development funds would be diverted to other priorities. Separate budget allocations were needed to meet humanitarian needs in the event of a natural disaster, for example.

79. ECLAC was an important branch of the governance architecture of the United Nations development system and had taken many important policy initiatives. The Commission should be more fully integrated into the system, however, to help identify the development priorities of Member States and to provide them with expert advice that met their specific needs.

80. South-South cooperation was integral to the subregion's achievement of the Goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda. While CARICOM appreciated the integration of South-South cooperation into the operational activities of the United Nations development system, it should not be a replacement for North-South cooperation.

81. Comprehensive plans for monitoring and evaluating the repositioning of the resident coordinator system and United Nations country teams were needed to keep the subregion on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Members of CARICOM needed help improving their data collection and analysis capacities and taking advantage of the policy support and guidance offered by the United Nations development system. UNDP had provided valuable support to members of the Community through its Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics programme. Welcoming the role played by UNDP in the repositioned resident coordinator system and the United Nations country team, he looked forward to similar articulation of the roles of other funds, agencies, programmes and entities under the new coordination arrangements.

82. **Mr. Hawke** (Observer for New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Canada and Australia, said that Member States and all UNDG members should agree that funding for the enhanced resident coordinator system should be depoliticized, predictable and free from micromanagement. A clear transition plan that minimized the impact on UNDP was also needed. Financial incentives, such as pooled funding, would encourage country teams to deliver as one.

83. Through the governing boards of United Nations agencies, Member States should show a renewed commitment to the enhanced resident coordinator system; resident coordinators should be given formal management authority governed by clear reporting lines; UNDAFs should be reviewed to ensure that they had impact and relevance; resident coordinator offices should be granted more resources and greater policy and analysis capacity; and resident coordinators should be granted career incentives and have access to development opportunities.

84. The United Nations development system needed to be streamlined at the regional level to complement the delivery of development assistance. The added value of the regional economic commissions would therefore need to be carefully considered. UNDG and the regional consultative mechanism needed to be part of a single regional coordination process. In addition, management reform and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs review needed to be included in the proposals for the restructuring of the regional development system.

85. At the regional level, the possibility of unifying support services should be considered, as it would result in efficiency gains. At the global level, greater strategic oversight of the United Nations development system was needed. In particular, governance of the Council needed to be improved and the operational activities segment needed to be simplified to improve the quality of the sessions.

86. Noting that one goal of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was the improvement of the United Nations system's baseline data, he welcomed measures by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to improve the quality of management data and to improve system-wide coherence. The system-wide strategic document should be a living document and could help to increase transparency and engagement with the Member States.

87. All Member States needed to contribute to the search for new sources of funding and efforts to broaden the donor base, while non-traditional donors should be encouraged to increase their contributions. More incentives were needed to encourage investment from Members States as well as the private sector, philanthropic organizations and civil society. Although Canada, Australia and New Zealand already provided multi-year core contributions, used pooled funding mechanisms and invested significantly in cross-cutting funds, discussions on the proposed funding compact would help them to align and strengthen those investments.

88. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Observer for Paraguay), speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that members of the Group were particularly vulnerable and isolated from world markets and deserved special attention during the repositioning of the United Nations development

system. The implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 was integral to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. United Nations country teams and resident coordinators should be aware of the goals and priorities set out in those documents and incorporate them into national development plans in transit countries as well as landlocked developing countries.

89. Strong partnerships were needed at the global, regional, intergovernmental and inter-agency levels with the private sector and civil society. The United Nations system's approach should give priority to vulnerable countries and be bolstered by strong partnerships with international and financial organizations, in particular the World Bank.

90. A revitalized United Nations development system needed adequate funding to do its job. In particular, support to landlocked developing countries and the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action needed to be scaled up. In that connection, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States needed to be strengthened. The special challenges and needs of landlocked developing countries also needed to be addressed, as had been recognized in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

91. While non-core funding was an important part of the overall resource base of United Nations operational activities, the decrease in the overall core budget of the United Nations development system, which should be adequate and predictable, was deeply concerning. Improvement of the United Nations development system needed to be guided by the principles of transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, in accordance with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

92. **Ms. Chigiyal** (Observer for the Federated States of Micronesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of Pacific Small Island Developing States, said that two resident coordinators and a joint United Nations country team oversaw the United Nations operations in the Pacific from two regional hubs in Fiji and Samoa. Travel from the regional offices to the countries they served was complicated and expensive, resulting in infrequent site visits.

93. The reform of the United Nations development system should result in greater integration of its activities. To that end, resident coordinators should be empowered to oversee all activities in the field. A strong central planning document, such as UNDAF, was useful only if it was developed in close consultation with Member States and reflected their national development priorities. Thus, in the multi-country context of the Pacific region, the United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018–2022, a regional planning document, needed to be balanced against plans that structured activities at the national level. A new generation of country teams comprising international civil servants with backgrounds tailored to local priorities would provide indispensable support to national sustainable development aspirations.

94. The mandate of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was to tailor the role and operational activities of multi-country offices to the specific challenges facing them in close consultation with Pacific small island developing States. To ensure that multi-country offices had adequate funding to pay for higher operating costs, a discretionary fund could be established and scaled up to reflect the number of countries within the purview of a given office. That number should be limited, however, as called for in General Assembly resolution 71/243, and new offices should be established if the distances were too great or the number of countries too high. In that connection, a new multi-country office was needed in the North Pacific.

95. **Mr. Castro Córdoba** (Observer for Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Like-minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, said that inequality remained pervasive in middle-income countries, which were home to 73 per cent of the world's people living in poverty. The repositioning of the United Nations development system was thus an opportunity to reinvigorate the support being provided to middle-income countries in accordance with the principle of leaving no one behind.

96. Although the United Nations development system promoted innovation and capacity-building and supported public policy design and technology transfer in middle-income countries, there was a need for greater coordination of operational activities and improvements to the overall strategy. A comprehensive strategy for the United Nations development system needed to ensure that global and regional programmes could be adapted to the changing needs of middle-income countries. The reformed physical presence of the United Nations development system should be aligned with national development priorities and focus on areas in which it could make the biggest difference in bringing about sustainable social, economic and environmental development. In that connection, future reports of the Secretary-General should highlight the role that the Chief Economist at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would play in improving communication

with international financial institutions regarding eligibility for concessional financing and graduation policies for middle-income countries.

97. The United Nations development system should take the lead in directing international support to middle-income countries and fostering new partnerships with international financial organizations, regional organizations and regional development banks. It should also continue efforts to mainstream South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation involving middle-income countries, which would have a multiplier effort on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The repositioning process would also allow the United Nations development system to address the exclusion factors that limited access to international cooperation by middle-income countries.

98. The Council should cooperate closely with the General Assembly ahead of the high-level event on middle-income countries, to be held later in the year, to showcase the role of the United Nations development system.

99. **Ms. Krisnamurthi** (Observer for Indonesia), speaking also on behalf of Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia, said that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions was the main goal of implementing the 2030 Agenda, and the repositioning of the United Nations development system would ensure that the United Nations development system was fit for that purpose. The reform process should be based on the key principles of reinforcing national ownership of the 2030 Agenda, developing country-contextual responses and ensuring the effective delivery of development results on the ground. As a result, the United Nations development system should become more strategic, accountable and collaborative.

100. A stronger focus on development outcomes would be welcome as part of the efforts to strengthen the resident coordinator system. In implementing its tasks and functions, the system should ensure that national leadership, ownership and priorities were maintained through close consultation with Governments. Resident coordinators could also improve coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts at the national level in countries facing humanitarian emergencies or in countries facing conflict and post-conflict situations. Resident coordinator recruitment should seek gender balance and geographical diversity.

101. The new generation of United Nations country teams must respond to, and work with, Governments to implement the whole 2030 Agenda to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDAFs should be the basis for strategic engagement with Governments to implement their priorities. In turn, Governments should actively participate in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of their UNDAFs. While the country team's composition should reflect the needs of the host country and should be able to fulfil its mandate, special attention should be paid to the composition of country teams in countries or groups of countries in special situations, such as least developed countries.

102. Expanded partnerships with the private sector, including under the United Nations Global Compact, more collaboration with the World Bank, international financial institutions and South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation would assist in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as would greater flexibility of earmarked contributions and a broader contributor base.

103. While greater coordination among United Nations bodies was also needed at the regional level to avoid duplication, a flexible approach was needed that benefited from the best practices of existing regional institutions, built on the strengths of each region and met the needs of the countries in the region.

104. Lastly, with regard to strategic direction, oversight and accountability, the deliberative role of the Council should be reinforced. The operational activities segment had provided greater clarity which would help Members States to reach consensus.

105. **Mr. Matjila** (South Africa) said that strengthening the role of the United Nations development system and its capacity to help developing countries to achieve their development goals was crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He was encouraged by the Secretary-General's efforts to address gaps and overlaps within the system and to ensure that its activities at the country level were more efficient, transparent and inclusive.

106. Operational activities for development needed adequate, predictable and stable funding. The growing imbalance between core and non-core resources hindered programming at the country level. The rapid increase in the use of earmarked funds contributed to the fragmentation of United Nations entities at the country level. Furthermore, while the United Nations development system was increasingly expected to do more, it was not being provided with the necessary funding to fulfil its mandate. Proposed partnerships at the country level should therefore provide for government engagement and match local needs. At the global level, partnerships should be flexible and focus on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, giving them all equal weight. The United Nations development system should pursue its core mandate to support demand-driven development efforts in which

Governments played a leadership role for the achievement of the Goals.

107. **Mr. Castro Córdoba** (Observer for Costa Rica) said that the reform of the United Nations development system must take into account the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development — the central aim underlying the system's gradual transformation — when ascertaining the specific needs and challenges of developing countries. The reform process should also address the particular obstacles and structural gaps still faced by middle-income countries, as the graduation criteria applied by agencies and programmes and the attendant budgetary challenges constrained those countries' institutional capacities, forcing them to reframe their relationship to the system.

108. The United Nations development system should also acknowledge that middle-income countries were both beneficiaries of, and participants in, South-South and triangular cooperation; hence, investments in those countries would have a ripple effect on regional development strategies. United Nations funds and programmes should coordinate measures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals strategically, avoiding duplication and building on good practices. The role of regional commissions in promoting public policy and good practices related to development should be recognized. Lastly, the financing of operational activities and resident coordinators in developing countries should be considered carefully, so as to respond in a coherent manner to country capacities.

109. **Mr. Laaksonen** (Observer for Finland) said that his Government fully supported the reform of the United Nations development system, the purpose of which was to keep the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. In that regard, the United Nations development system should focus on the needs of the least developed countries and fragile States, and specialized agencies should remain involved in the reform process.

110. The new generation of United Nations country teams should be more integrated, efficient and results-driven, and the comparative advantage of the various agencies, funds and programmes should determine their presence in the field. There was clear scope for increased synergies and greater integration of functions and resources at the country level.

111. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's vision to strengthen the resident coordinator system. Resident coordinators should be impartial and independent and should have authority over country teams and access to more predictable funding. However, one concern was that the current proposal might result in the politicization of the resident coordinator function.

112. Reform of the funding structure was urgently needed, which included an increase in the share of core resources and a broader and more diverse donor base. Greater investment in the United Nations development system should be linked to the system's greater effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. The proposed funding compact was missing a reference to domestic resource mobilization and the role of the private sector and should include more detailed information on cost savings and efficiency gains.

113. The 2030 Agenda would not be achieved if women and girls were excluded. Greater investments in gender equality and women's empowerment were needed at the country level. To that end, the expertise and system-wide coordinating role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) should be fully utilized throughout the reform process.

114. **Ms. Mudallali** (Lebanon) said that operational activities for development must be universal, voluntary, neutral and aligned with national priorities and noted with concern the growing imbalance between core and non-core funding for such activities.

115. Development activities in Lebanon had been carried out alongside peacebuilding, peacekeeping and humanitarian activities for several decades, with support from various entities within the United Nations development system, especially the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

116. Since 2011, her Government had been trying to maintain stability in the face of the mass influx of more than 1.2 million persons displaced by the ongoing crisis in Syria. While the United Nations had responded by placing a greater emphasis on humanitarian activities in her country, more coordination had been needed between the development and humanitarian activities of United Nations entities and operations at the country level, while also taking into account national plans, in order to meet the needs of both displaced persons and their host communities. The United Nations Strategic Framework for Lebanon (2017–2020) had recognized the need for such an approach, but the United Nations development system as a whole needed to become more integrated to overcome the challenges that it faced.

117. **Mr. Aguirre Vacchieri** (Chile) said that including the repositioning of the United Nations development system on the agenda of the Council had demonstrated that it was equipped to contribute to the discussion. The effectiveness of United Nations operational activities for development could only be guaranteed if actions at the global, regional and local levels were incorporated into a single comprehensive vision. The Sustainable

Development Goals would not be achieved unless a multidimensional approach was taken to address poverty, taking the special needs of middle-income countries into account.

118. The regional dimensions of United Nations activities needed to take each region's specificities into account and boost the organic structure of the regional commissions. The reform process should preserve and strengthen ECLAC, which functioned as a centre for research and analysis, cooperation, technical assistance and intergovernmental dialogue.

119. The 2030 Agenda could not be implemented without the participation of civil society, foundations, academia and the private sector. Public-private partnerships, South-South cooperation, triangular cooperation and innovative financing mechanisms played a central role in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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Operational activities for development segment

Summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 1 March 2018, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Vice-President) ..... (Belgium)

Contents

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*)

Panel discussion "Strengthening global-level accountability, transparency and oversight of the United Nations development system"

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (*continued*)

General discussion (continued)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/72/124-E/2018/3, A/72/684-E/2018/7 and A/73/63-E/2018/8)

Panel discussion: "Strengthening global-level accountability, transparency and oversight of the United Nations development system"

1. **The President** asked what factors should be taken into account when considering the Secretary-General's proposal to create a joint executive board of the New York-based funds and programmes.

2. **Mr. Koonjul** (President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations), panellist, said that UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS were three distinct bodies that already had a joint Executive Board and bureau. That system provided members of the Executive Board with an overview of the activities of all three agencies, which had been useful in identifying areas for collaborative work. The arrangement was efficient, since there was a single secretariat providing logistical and administrative support for the three annual sessions of the Executive Board. It also enabled smoother collaboration with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

3. The joint segments of the Executive Board promoted coordination and coherence among the agencies. The segments saved time, as agencies presented similar reports together, and afforded an opportunity for delegations to provide feedback and recommendations that applied to all three agencies. The Executive Board also held agency-specific meetings, although issues invariably arose that were of common concern to all three, so there were still opportunities to identify potential areas for collaboration.

4. Having a joint Executive Board reduced travel costs for Member States that had a single focal point for more than one of the agencies. The Secretary-General's proposal to establish a joint executive board for the funds and programmes based in New York — UNDP, UNOPS, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) — could likewise result in savings for some delegations. The arrangement also lowered costs for the participating agencies. For instance, since UNDP hosted the secretariat, UNFPA and UNOPS had been able to cut costs by benefiting from UNDP service legal agreements. Moreover, the preparation of joint documents represented enormous savings in terms of funds and human resources.

5. Improving oversight was certainly important. However, to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it was even more important to increase coherence and coordination at the country level to ensure that all agencies on the ground were working together and delivering as one, taking national priorities into account.

6. It might be worth considering holding more joint meetings of the Executive Boards of the different agencies, as an alternative to merging them into a single executive board. There was currently only one joint meeting of the Executive Boards per year, which was insufficient. The concerns of some delegations that there would not be enough time for discussion of all relevant issues if the Executive Boards were combined were valid. In contrast, more frequent joint meetings would give delegations greater opportunities to participate in relevant discussions, and there could be more focused discussions on how United Nations entities might work together. If the Executive Boards were merged, every effort should be made to make the most of the joint meetings that would likely be held as part of the progress envisaged by the Secretary-General.

7. It was important to align the oversight practices of the agencies by having all of them submit evaluation reports to their respective Executive Boards. Currently, some still submitted reports to their directors.

8. The President asked about the implications of the Secretary-General's proposal to institutionalize the operational activities for development segment as an accountability platform for system-wide performance in relation to the 2030 Agenda.

9. **Mr. Hattrem** (President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations), panellist, said that that the Council's operational activities for development segment was one of the most obvious forums for providing system-wide guidance and enhancing the transparency and accountability of the United Nations development

system. However, the segment should be improved by making discussions more evidence-based and ensuring that all actors in the development system — including funds, programmes, agencies, resident coordinators and other country-level representatives — were given an opportunity to contribute. If those changes were made, the Council would also be able to address inter-agency coordination and collaboration with partners within and outside the United Nations. The Secretary-General's proposal to convene two operational activities segments per year could help to achieve that aim. However, any such changes must be considered in the context of the work on the strengthening of the Council, in order to avoid an excessive increase in the number Council meetings.

10. There would be challenges in creating a joint executive board, such as the need for both common and agency-specific segments and the potential difficultly of determining the composition of the new executive board. Nevertheless, the proposal was worth exploring, since many issues of common concern could be addressed well through the creation of a joint board, including the call from Member States for the creation of a system-wide evaluation function to complement the internal evaluation mechanisms of the individual agencies. Such system-wide mandates had the potential to further the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

11. The New York Executive Boards needed to strengthen their effectiveness, transparency and accountability in order to meet the expectations set out in General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In that connection, in 2017 the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS, UN-Women and the World Food Programme (WFP) had drafted a non-paper on improving the working methods of their Executive Boards. It was the responsibility of the Presidents of the Executive Boards to follow up on that paper, in order to support and complement the reform of the United Nations development system.

12. **The President** enquired about the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a small, independent system-wide evaluation unit that would be directly accountable to the Council.

13. **Mr. Abdulla** (Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP)), panellist, speaking via video link from Rome, said that that the significant efforts made by WFP in recent years to improve its accountability, transparency and oversight had helped to align its work with the 2030 Agenda and prepare it for the upcoming reform and repositioning of the United Nations development system. WFP had developed a new corporate results framework that enhanced its accountability, transparency and capacity for evaluation in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets. The new framework, which was already being implemented in 68 of the 80 WFP country offices, enabled the Programme to work in line with national priorities and report more clearly on the resources it received. WFP supported the Secretary-General's proposed reforms. In particular, it would welcome improved governance and oversight by Member States, which would help Governments to achieve the results they wanted on the ground.

14. The WFP evaluation mechanism reported directly to the Executive Board. All evaluation reports were independent and were made public once they had been approved by the Executive Board. Prior to the formal consideration of the reports by the Executive Board, informal round tables involving the Executive Board, the Director of Evaluation and senior management were held to provide an opportunity for a more open and in-depth discussion than was often possible at formal meetings. The Executive Board also held informal sessions on other topics over the course of the year. In 2017, more than 40 days of informal discussions had been organized.

15. Centralized and decentralized evaluations were conducted under the WFP evaluation framework. Decentralized evaluations were overseen by the Office of Evaluation but carried out by evaluation officers within the regional bureaux. Cross-cutting impact evaluations were also conducted worldwide. System-wide evaluation would provide an additional perspective to complement those evaluations. An independent system-wide evaluation function would certainly be useful in principle, although it would be necessary to determine the exact nature of the relationship between that function and existing evaluation entities and processes, including the inter-agency humanitarian evaluations carried out by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. It would also be worthwhile increasing the number of joint evaluations, especially in support of joint programming with partners within and beyond the United Nations system.

16. Given that agencies already bore a heavy reporting burden, any new system-wide reporting requirements should be strictly focused on obtaining results that provided a meaningful indication of progress being made towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. WFP had already been working to enhance accountability without creating an excessive reporting burden and was collaborating with other agencies to standardize reporting. Useful lessons could be learned

from the harmonized reporting pilots that were taking place in some countries.

17. Lastly, WFP had joined the International Aid Transparency Initiative and would encourage system-wide participation in that initiative.

18. **Mr. Kanja** (Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services) said that the establishment of an independent system-wide evaluation function as envisaged by the Secretary-General would be an appropriate response to the call in General Assembly resolution 71/243 for a mechanism to enhance coherence and interdependence in the overall evaluation architecture of the United Nations development system. The Office of Internal Oversight Services would retain its mandate to carry out independent evaluations of Secretariat entities under the new arrangements. The Office was already effectively coordinating its work with other system-wide oversight bodies, such as the Joint Inspection Unit and the Board of Auditors, and would ensure that its activities also complemented those of the system-wide evaluation function.

19. Lessons had been learned from the implementation of the policy for independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. First, an inadequately resourced office would run the risk of undermining the quality and usefulness of system-wide evaluation and confidence in the mechanism. Second, information had to flow from the evaluation unit to governing bodies and senior management in order to have an impact.

20. Evaluation could be a very useful support to effective governance and oversight mechanisms if the evaluation body was independent and able to speak the truth to power, and if the results of its work were used to optimize mandate-setting, programme design and resource allocation. However, if evaluation did not have a clear purpose or was not clearly linked to decision-making processes, it would not be an efficient use of time and resources. Cohesive system-wide governance and oversight were also needed in order for the results of evaluations to be used effectively.

21. **Mr. Kramer** (Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit) said that the Joint Inspection Unit was the only independent body with system-wide oversight functions, although it was not the only entity with the capacity to carry out system-wide evaluation. The Joint Inspection Unit had been heavily involved in the development of the system-wide evaluation policy requested in the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, as contained in General Assembly resolution 67/226, and the conduct of two pilot system-wide evaluations.

22. When considering the Secretary-General's ideas for system-wide evaluation, it would be useful to draw on the experience gained through the significant efforts that had already been made, including the two pilot evaluations, the review of the institutional framework for independent system-wide evaluation and the work on evaluation policy development. The initial focus of efforts to establish an independent system-wide evaluation entity should not be on structures and resources; it was more important to determine the nature of the mechanism, whom it was meant to serve and what action would be taken in response to its findings. While it was up to Member States to define the topics and direction of the evaluations, the experience of the pilot system-wide evaluations suggested that they should be supported by a strong analytical effort to provide them with relevant information on potential areas for evaluation. It was also essential that the target audience for the evaluations was in a position to take meaningful decisions in response to the findings. If the Council were to be the audience, consideration must be given to the matter of whether, and in what way, guidance from the Council influenced decisions of the entities responsible for resource allocation or normative work. It was not clear that the Council currently had such influence. If the Council wished to take on that role, it might consider what guidance could be offered, and to whom, on the basis of the findings of the pilot evaluations.

23. On the related matter of governance arrangements, two main themes had emerged: the need for centralized planning of overall priorities and positioning, and the requirement for more unified system-level decision-making on programmatic issues. The Joint Inspection Unit wished to encourage Member States to clarify where collective governance would be appropriate and then adapt mechanisms to enable such governance. The non-exhaustive list of system-wide functions listed in paragraph 20 of the Secretary General's report on the repositioning of the United Nations development system (A/72/684-E/2018/7, annex), could be useful in that regard.

24. **Mr. Naidoo** (Vice-Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group) said that the need for credible, independent system-wide evaluation had been discussed frequently within the United Nations system over the past 15 years. The High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment had recommended the creation of a system-wide evaluation mechanism in 2008, and the General Assembly had since underscored the importance of such a mechanism. However, the United Nations still lacked the capacity to adequately implement system-wide evaluation. The

United Nations Evaluation Group would welcome the establishment of a system-wide evaluation function that could serve as an entry point to the coordination of the multiple entities involved and thereby promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, provided it was equipped with a strong mandate and appropriate capacities. The mechanism could inform policymaking, implementation and decision-making at the country level and at the level of the governing bodies of the various United Nations agencies.

25. The implementation of the Secretary-General's proposal to create a unit to carry out independent system-wide evaluation would enable evaluative evidence to be brought to the Council's debates. Guided by the principles of credibility, independence, utility and subsidiarity, the unit could coordinate, collaborate in and lead evaluations related to system-wide matters of strategic interest. It could also synthesize key findings from evaluations of the performance of the United Nations, which would allow Member States to hold the Organization accountable for its actions and the support it was providing to countries.

26. While there were a number of risks associated with the development of system-wide evaluation capacity, such as the need for additional resources and a potential lack of political will, delaying the decision carried the more serious risk of failing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The implementation of a coherent and coordinated system-wide evaluation function would incur an initial cost, but it could result in long-term savings as the work plans of the various evaluation offices converged. The Secretary-General estimated that the system-wide evaluation unit would operate initially on a budget of $3 million, which amounted to 0.01 per cent of the expenditure on United Nations operational activities for development in 2016. That would be a worthwhile investment in ensuring that the remaining 99.99 per cent of Member State contributions to the United Nations development system were well spent.

27. **Mr. Moussa** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, in the interest of efficiency, any discussions on potential reforms to the Council should take place in the context of the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1. The Group supported the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the operational activities for development segment as an accountability platform for system-wide performance in relation to the 2030 Agenda. However, it was not persuaded that holding biannual meetings of the segment with distinct focuses would be practical or improve accountability. With regard to the proposal to use the second biannual meeting to enhance guidance on the development system's coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts, the Group wished to caution against expanding the roles of the United Nations development system and the Council beyond their mandates.

28. In view of the need to enhance system-wide coordination, the Group supported the proposal to reinforce the interface between the development system and Member States on system-wide issues. It was still considering the proposal to combine the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women but wished to stress that any change to the Executive Boards should not diminish the information made available to Member States concerning the work of those bodies. The Group wished to know what impact the establishment of a joint board would have on the representation of developing countries and their role in the oversight of the work of the entities in question.

29. It might be more useful to enhance the capacities of the Joint Inspection Unit rather than establishing an independent system-wide evaluation unit, to be administered by the Department of Management and directly accountable to the Council, especially in the light of the budgetary implications associated with the creation of a new unit. It was not clear what role the Development Operations Coordination Office had in relation to the proposed unit, or how the new unit would relate to and interact with existing oversight bodies. In that connection, the Group wished to stress the importance of safeguarding the independence and neutrality of any system-wide inspection unit.

30. **Ms. Haque** (Observer for Bangladesh) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to make the operational activities for development segment an accountability platform for system-wide performance in relation to the 2030 Agenda, provided that process was coherent with the strengthening of the Council. With regard to the proposal that the second biannual meeting of the operational activities for development segment should provide guidance on the development system's coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts, the Council's work in that area must remain within the limits of the mandate established in paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution 71/243.

31. Merging the Executive Boards of the New York-based funds and programmes could result in a regrettable loss of entity-specific accountability and oversight. It might be preferable to ensure accountability, coherence, coordination and collaboration among agencies by making greater use of the existing mechanisms for convening joint board

meetings. She would be interested to hear the views of the panellists in that regard. It should also be noted that many States had a different focal point for each agency, in which case a joint executive board would not reduce travel costs.

32. **Ms. Baños** (El Salvador) said that the merging of the boards should be accompanied by enhanced coordination, coherence, transparency and accountability at the country level, as improved national oversight and leadership would translate into benefits at the regional and global levels. She would be interested to hear the views and recommendations of the panellists with regard to mechanisms that could be used to increase coherence and transparency at the country level so that relevant feedback about the situation on the ground could be shared in forums such as the Council.

33. **Ms. Steiger** (Observer for Switzerland) said that evaluations enabled organizations to take stock of the implementation of their strategies and programmes and the achievement of their goals. If the United Nations development system was being called on to act as a single system, there must be a tool in place to provide information on the progress made towards the achievement of the shared objectives of its entities. Evaluations should not be used to control the United Nations development system but rather to help it to take decisions that would steer its activities in the right direction. It was important to discuss ways to put in place a tool that would provide a sound basis for dialogue with the entities within the development system.

34. **Ms. Wex** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation was open to establishing a joint executive board, granting legislative authority to the existing joint meeting of the Executive Boards or strengthening the Office of Internal Oversight Services. However, doing all three was probably unnecessary and was likely to result in inefficiency and duplication of work. She asked whether the granting of short-term legislative authority to the joint meeting of the Executive Boards would be conducted in parallel with the progressive merging of the boards, and what the timeline and process would be. She also wished to know whether joint meetings of the Executive Boards would be abolished if the joint executive board was established. It was important to give in-depth consideration to the desired functions and purposes of the proposed system-wide evaluation mechanism before deciding what structure such an entity should have.

35. **Ms. Lagrange** (France) said that further consideration should be given to the proposals to enhance oversight and evaluation, as they could help to achieve the primary objective of the reform process: enhanced coordination among the entities of the United Nations development system. With regard to the suggestion to increase the number of joint meetings of the Executive Boards, she asked what the possible topics of such meetings might be. Since effective system-wide evaluation had to be based on solid system-level documents, she wished to know what guarantees were in place to ensure that such documentation would be developed. Lastly, she stressed that the reform of the development system should be carried out alongside the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1, in the interest of coherence.

36. **Mr. Koonjul** (President of the Executive Board of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations) said that issues such as maintaining entity-specific accountability would most likely be examined during the gradual progression towards a joint executive board, which would take a number of years. He would not favour putting an end to joint meetings of the Executive Boards and would prefer to permanently increase the frequency of those meetings and grant them legislative authority. Under such a system, the Presidents of the different Executive Boards could take the recommendations emanating from the joint meetings to their respective Boards for approval.

37. Delivering as one at the national level was crucial. Governments and the resident coordinators must work together to ensure that national priorities were taken on board. Resident coordinators should make sure that all funds and programmes operating in a country aligned their activities with the Government's national priorities.

38. **Mr. Hattrem** (President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations) said that there were compelling arguments in favour of establishing an independent system-wide evaluation function to promote the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It would also be worth giving further consideration to the suggestion of having more than one joint meeting of the Executive Boards per year.

39. **Mr. Abdulla** (Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP)) said that WFP had not been particularly involved in discussions on the new joint executive board, since that initiative would focus initially on the funds and programmes based in New York. The situation of WFP was also complicated by the

fact that it had been established jointly by the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

40. He had found the joint meetings of the Executive Boards to be very useful. The FAO Council and the Executive Boards of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP, which were all based in Rome, had also held an informal joint meeting in 2017. It was likely that such meetings would continue, although it had not yet been decided what decision-making authority they would have.

41. It was essential to determine the purpose of system-wide evaluations and how they would be used. There were many details to be worked out, but the process of developing the evaluation methodology would be worth the effort if done well.

42. **Mr. Kramer** (Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit) said that the emphasis on horizontal cooperation and action in the 2030 Agenda was a strong argument in favour of system-wide evaluation. However, applying a system-wide lens to the current agency-centric system would be very difficult, given the varying analytical capacities, operating methods and governance arrangements of the different entities. Therefore, it was important to identify the end-users and purposes of future evaluations before undertaking the expensive bureaucratic exercise of determining the structure and means of financing of the new evaluation mechanism.

43. The Joint Inspection Unit was a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and would undertake any tasks requested of it by the General Assembly. However, the Unit's current mandate was not limited to evaluation; it also carried out inspections and investigations concerning a wide range of issues. The Unit would not be able to carry out the proposed system-wide evaluations within its current structure and resources.

44. He encouraged the Council to examine and draw on the results of the pilot initiatives that had been undertaken and also the Joint Inspection Unit's analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/6).

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to the policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/72/124-E/2018/3, A/72/684-E/2018/7 and A/73/63-E/2018/8)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (*continued*) (E/2017/34/Rev.1, E/2018/36 and E/2018/65)

General discussion (*continued*)

45. **The President** invited the Council to continue its general discussion of agenda item 7 as a whole.

46. **Mr. Haque** (Observer for Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the Group supported the Secretary-General's vision for transforming the United Nations development system and enhancing its effectiveness, cohesion, leadership and accountability.

47. The Group accorded high priority to the presence of United Nations country teams on its territories. Given the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the expenditures of the United Nations development system should reflect a balanced treatment of all three dimensions of sustainable development. Vulnerable countries such as least developed countries, landlocked least developed countries and small island developing States required additional support to the economic pillar of sustainable development, especially when it came to productive capacity-building and structural transformation.

48. Robust strategic planning at the country level was crucial. Since United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) would serve as the Organization's most important planning instrument for countries, they must be designed to reflect the national priorities and concerns of least developed countries. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 provided strategic guidance on eradicating poverty, achieving development goals and graduating from the least developed country category through strengthened partnerships. Its provisions should be incorporated into the revitalized UNDAFs.

49. The resident coordinator system should primarily focus on development in host countries, and resident coordinators serving in least developed countries must be taught to recognize those countries' unique developmental challenges. Resident coordinators must also adhere to the principles of national leadership, national ownership and non-politicization. Given that securing financing for development was the greatest

challenge faced by least developed countries, resident coordinators should assist those States in mobilizing funds, in consultation with the Government of the relevant host country.

50. United Nations development system entities should enhance their coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts in countries facing humanitarian emergencies, conflicts and post-conflict situations, but without losing their focus on development.

51. The Group welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to build partnerships with international financial institutions and noted that the continued decline in core contributions to the United Nations development system had reduced the Organization's effectiveness. Without predictable, sustainable and flexible funding, the United Nations development system would not be fit for purpose. Pooled funds could expand the donor base and foster collaboration among various agencies.

52. In General Assembly resolution 71/243, the United Nations development system had been called upon to continue to prioritize allocations to least developed countries. In that regard, the Group underlined that the offices supporting least developed countries, landlocked least developed countries and small island developing States needed to be strengthened.

53. **Mr. Tevi** (Observer for Vanuatu), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, said that a devastating cyclone season had recently impacted Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand, and that Papua New Guinea had only just been struck by an earthquake. In that context, reforms to the resident coordinator system and the multi-country offices must facilitate coherent responses to the unique challenges facing Pacific States and other small island developing States.

54. While the Forum welcomed the creation of the United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018–2022, a subregional UNDAF that would assist 14 Pacific islands in implementing the 2030 Agenda, it noted that the Pacific island region was a complex environment. The Resident Coordinator in Fiji, for example, had become the Humanitarian Coordinator and was also the senior representative of the United Nations responsible for implementing the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the 2030 Agenda, among many other duties. However, she had very few resources for implementing those mandates: the budget for travel, for instance, was inadequate to cover an economic zone of approximately 40 million square kilometres.

55. The Forum would therefore welcome realistic reforms that empowered resident coordinators as the leaders of a new generation of country teams, guaranteed them financial and capacity support from the United Nations system, and ensured that multi-country offices covered fewer countries and were better resourced, particularly for travel and coordination purposes. Funding to resident coordinators should be more stable, predictable and sustainable. The reforms should ensure that the development system could fulfil its mandate in the face of humanitarian, climate and peace challenges. They should also strengthen the resident coordinator system based on the principles of impartiality, neutrality and respect for national sovereignty.

56. **Mr. Mohamed** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that small island developing States faced unique challenges requiring coherent and holistic responses. Reform of the United Nations development system should take the particular circumstances of those States into account. Since country leadership was crucial for sustainable development, Governments should set the priorities that would underpin UNDAFs. Ultimately, Member States, and not United Nations agencies, were responsible for implementing the 2030 Agenda, and therefore UNDAFs should be strictly guided by the priorities of the programme country.

57. Many small island developing States were served by United Nations country teams that operated through multi-country offices. Such country teams must base their priorities on those set by the host country, they must be able to provide the necessary guidance, advice and support, and they must also be able to help Governments in raising funds for priority areas. Each country served by a multi-country office must be allowed to develop its own priorities and be assigned its own UNDAF, as countries from the same region did not necessarily share the same priorities. Multi-country offices should have their own UNDAFs in order to respond to subregional issues.

58. While it was not practical or efficient to appoint a resident coordinator in all programme countries, the practice of assigning one resident coordinator to 10 or more countries was not practical or financially sustainable. Resident coordinators should be well versed in the issues faced by small island developing States, have a background in development and disaster risk management and be culturally sensitive, flexible and respectful of national leadership. Regional reforms that advanced country priorities were also welcome. At the same time, regional-level actors must improve coordination in order to avoid duplication and ensure

that all of the Sustainable Development Goals were addressed.

59. The operational activities for development segment should be restructured as a forum that allowed Member States to increase oversight of United Nations development system entities. While the United Nations development system was not responsible for the management and coordination of partnerships, resident coordinators and United Nations development system entities should help small island developing States to leverage those relationships by developing a network of vetted partners. Greater clarity should also be provided regarding the role of the United Nations Office for Partnerships and how it would function in relation to existing partnerships, such as the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework.

60. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Observer for Cuba) said that, in the repositioning of the development system, UNDAFs should be established as the guiding document for operational activities at the national level, including the work of resident coordinators. The United Nations development system should take a flexible and inclusive approach to country programmes and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It must fully respect the mandates set out in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolutions and be guided by the principle that there was no "one-size-fits-all" solution. Resident coordinators should be given greater authority over country teams in relation to the implementation of UNDAFs. However, her delegation strongly opposed all proposals that departed from the strictly development-related mandate of resident coordinators, diverged from the principles of respect for the sovereignty of host countries and non-interference in their internal affairs, or created difficulties in the relationship between national authorities and the entities of the United Nations development system on the ground.

61. It was important to take into account the specific situation of each region and the capacity and experience of each regional commission. In that context, her delegation supported and commended the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

62. The proposals designed to correct the imbalance between core and non-core resources were welcome. However, it was essential to maintain North-South cooperation in resource mobilization, including official development assistance (ODA) from developed countries. Resources received from partners should be considered additional resources, and partnerships must be developed only on the basis of clear and effective oversight, transparency and accountability mechanisms.

63. **Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Observer for Brazil) said that General Assembly resolution 71/243 had established the principles and key policy orientations of the United Nations development system for the first phase of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The task ahead was not to reopen that resolution but to advance its implementation. Brazil favoured more effective United Nations country teams that were flexible, adapted to local situations and worked closely with Governments. Resident coordinators should lead the country teams in implementing UNDAFs in a manner that reinforced principles of national ownership and accountability to Member States.

64. Resources saved by back-office restructuring should be used to strengthen development system activities. Brazil supported flexible, non-core funding modalities, such as pooled funds, as an alternative to strict earmarking. Pooled funds reduced transaction costs and the reporting burdens associated with development cooperation initiatives. Such initiatives should be programmed at the field level to respond to the development priorities of the concerned country, and developing countries should receive assistance in tapping the full potential of the available funds.

65. Partnerships could be used to encourage stakeholders to engage in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Innovative partnerships could build synergies, improve development results and provide additional funding. Although the United Nations development system could play a role in developing partnerships, it should defer country-level arrangements to Governments. South-South and trilateral cooperation had delivered results on the ground and could be better utilized by a repositioned United Nations development system.

66. **Mr. Mahmadaminov** (Tajikistan) said that the first five Sustainable Development Goals, which addressed poverty, hunger, health, education and gender, received the highest allocation of funds and personnel, while the Goals related to the environment and sustainability remained underfunded. The system needed to fill in those gaps by strengthening existing mechanisms and helping States to leverage financing, partnerships and technologies.

67. His delegation welcomed an approach to United Nations country teams that was demand-driven and tailored to national priorities. Governments should be consulted on the presence of particular United Nations entities in their countries, and must have the final say on strategic UNDAF objectives. While the idea of

independent and impartial resident coordinators was welcome, it was not clear how separating the functions of the resident coordinator and the UNDP resident representative would allow for such independence and impartiality if resident coordinators continued to rely on UNDP platforms and back offices.

68. The Secretary-General's commitment to developing partnerships with the World Bank and other international financial institutions was also welcome and would facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The proposed funding compact should preserve the principles of the operational activities for development of the United Nations development system, and funding should be predictable, less earmarked, and aligned with States' development priorities and strategies.

69. **Ms. Velichko** (Belarus) said that any changes to the United Nations development system must be carefully balanced, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations in all areas. Reform for its own sake should be avoided. Rather, the most effective elements of the existing development system architecture should be used to improve the system's work. Repositioning of the system should not increase financial burdens for Member States as a result of increased administrative expenditure, and resources should not be shifted to bureaucracy at the expense of development activities.

70. Effective repositioning of the United Nations development system should lead to specific improvements in the overall quality of work of country offices. Such improvements in the field could be achieved by strengthening cooperation with Governments and choosing the optimal means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In that context, Belarus welcomed the view of the Secretary-General regarding the need to observe the principle of national ownership and stressed that Governments must have a leading role in determining national development policies. Belarus also fully agreed with the Secretary-General's view that support for middle-income countries would need to be reinvigorated, as they represented a major proportion of the world's population.

71. Welcoming the decision to appoint a coordinator for middle-income countries within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, she noted that a future high-level meeting of the General Assembly on middle-income countries would lay the foundation for further support for middle-income countries at the United Nations. Her delegation looked forward to the President of the General Assembly appointing the coordinators of the negotiating process for the holding of such a high-level meeting.

72. **Mr. Momeni** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation looked forward to a stronger and more integrated United Nations development system that prioritized support for developing countries. The operational activities for development segment was an important forum for strengthening those activities and offering policy guidance. The segment also served as an accountability platform regarding system-wide performance to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

73. The eradication of poverty in all its forms was the most urgent matter for the United Nations development system to address on the ground. National ownership and leadership should be respected in the repositioning process, and the diverse needs and challenges of developing countries should be addressed. The configuration and placement of United Nations country teams must be determined in consultation with Governments, and host Governments should have the right to make final decisions on UNDAFs. The role of the regional economic commissions as platforms for intergovernmental cooperation and regional integration should be preserved.

74. Robust and sustainable funding for United Nations operational development activities was needed to support developing countries, and system-wide funding should be increased. Non-resident agencies with decades of experience in responding to the development needs of Member States should be given a stronger role in United Nations development system reform.

75. **Mr. Moraru** (Republic of Moldova) said that his country favoured proposals aimed at strengthening country-level coordination and coherence, rationalizing field presence, increasing accountability and improving the efficiency of business operations. It also supported the proposal for UNDAFs to become the principal planning instrument for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A new generation of country teams coordinated by empowered resident coordinators and supported by the relevant components of the United Nations development system was a promising managerial model conducive to a whole-of-system response.

76. In informal briefings on the repositioning of the United Nations development system, it had been emphasized that reforms should make use of existing resources. Member States should therefore receive further information on ways of maximizing efficiencies and cost savings and how to reduce duplication. The proposal to integrate the Executive Boards of the New York-based funds and programmes into a joint board

was an example of a cost-effective initiative that could also strengthen system-wide governance and oversight of the United Nations development system.

77. The Secretary-General's proposal to enhance oversight and evaluation functions by establishing an independent, system-wide evaluation unit deserved consideration. However, clarity was needed how the new unit would interact with existing structures, particularly the Joint Inspection Unit.

78. Funding gaps presented a major obstacle to the efficient and effective delivery of operational activities for development. A repositioned United Nations development system should play a greater role in securing the adequate, predictable and flexible funding that was critical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by helping Governments to leverage partnerships and funding from the private sector and other sources. The Joint Policy Fund to Advance the 2030 Agenda through Integrated Policy could help to address funding issues, as could the Secretary-General's proposed funding compact.

79. **Mr. Begeç** (Turkey) said that the success of the 2030 Agenda required major improvements to the United Nations development system. According to General Assembly resolution 71/243, the reform process should proceed in a transparent and inclusive manner and take diverse views into account. National ownership was crucial for the repositioning of the development system. Reform efforts should preserve the delicate balance between peace and development, and the new resident coordinator system should play a stronger role in coordinating humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts at the national level.

80. His delegation requested further clarification on several issues: how the administrative and legal framework of the resident coordinator system would be negotiated with host countries; whether resident coordinators would be appointed to all Member States, and, if not, what criteria would be used; how the new mandate of the resident coordinators could be carried out without duplicating existing thematic and regional United Nations mechanisms; and how the UNDAF preparation phase would change in the light of the Secretary-General's proposal for UNDAFs to serve as the main planning document at the country level.

81. **Mr. Wu** Haitao (China) said that development should be the main focus of the reform process, with an emphasis on poverty eradication. The process, which should be led by Member States and be aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and major General Assembly resolutions, should also observe the principles of sovereignty, equality, non-interference in domestic affairs, international cooperation and respect for States' chosen development models. Furthermore, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be observed, and South-South and trilateral cooperation should complement, but not replace, North-South cooperation.

82. His delegation wished to draw attention to five principles in response to the Secretary-General's proposals. First, The United Nations system-wide strategic document (A/72/684-E/2018/7, annex) should be guided by the mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 71/243, focus on the main theme of development and appropriately address the relationship between development, peace and humanitarian work. Second, the establishment of new country teams should be aligned with country-specific situations and their development priorities. The core task of the country teams was to provide assistance to Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda and building their capacities. Third, reforms to the resident coordinator system should enjoy broad consensus from Member States. Resident coordinators should adhere strictly to the development mandates chosen by host Governments and maintain close communication with them. Fourth, efforts should be made to support the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in coordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to strengthen the roles of the regional commissions and to enhance the accountability to Member States through the Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Lastly, given the need for sufficient and predictable funding for the 2030 Agenda, developed countries should fulfil their ODA commitments and the United Nations should deepen its cooperation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank.

83. **Ms. Kadare** (Observer for Albania) said that if middle-income countries were able to accelerate their own sustainable development, they could contribute significantly to the success of the 2030 Agenda. Middle-income countries such as Albania should be allowed to benefit from initiatives that emphasized peer learning, capacity-building and the inclusion of marginalized groups. Revamped country teams could help greatly in that regard.

84. Regional initiatives were important. Several Western Balkan countries, including Albania, sought to join the European Union, a goal that was a key driver of regional transformation and a powerful incentive for reforms. The United Nations should use its regional

offices to forge partnerships and identify synergies with the 2030 Agenda. Country teams could draw on previous experiences in neighbouring countries while crafting tailored responses to the specific needs of States.

85. UNDAFs should serve as the basic instrument to guide collaboration. An empowered and impartial resident coordinator system was the key to ensuring coherent, accountable and effective responses to country needs. A matrixed reporting model among United Nations agency heads and resident coordinators would increase the effectiveness of reforms, and common back offices at the country level would enhance efficiency. Resident coordinators should receive clear guidance with respect to administrative, accountability and governance issues.

86. Albania endorsed the concept of system-wide results and predictable, multi-year funding, including pooled funding. The Joint Policy Fund would encourage innovation and attract funding for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

87. **Ms. Rosa Suazo** (Observer for Honduras) said that development programmes had become increasingly complex and interrelated, and the development system therefore needed sound mechanisms for technical and normative support to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretary-General's report on repositioning the United Nations development system provided a good starting point for discussions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels. Honduras supported the proposed package of seven major changes (A/72/684-E/2018/7, para 13), which should lead to better system-wide coordination, planning and accountability at the national level, with substantially improved linkages to the regional and global levels. Those changes must also reverse the highly fragmented funding base.

88. Honduras supported the adoption of flexible, cost-effective and collaborative models for field presence, in line with the needs and priorities of each country. Avoiding a "one-size-fits-all" approach to the repositioning of the development system was of special concern to middle-income countries, as they faced specific development challenges.

89. **Mr. Won** Doyeon (Republic of Korea) said that his country welcomed a reinvigorated resident coordinator system with a more integrated model for field work and a stronger emphasis on accountability and impartiality. As the resident coordinator system required adequate, predictable and sustainable funding, a detailed analysis was needed of the advantages and disadvantages of the different funding options. Resident coordinators should be able to coordinate system-wide actions at the national level to address humanitarian, development and peace issues. The recruitment system should also foster gender balance and geographical diversity among resident coordinators.

90. The Republic of Korea supported the system-wide approach to partnerships. Harmonized and common partnership standards, due diligence criteria and the timely communication of due diligence results among agencies were crucial for overcoming fragmented and project-focused partnerships.

91. The focus on pooled funds in the funding compact was welcome. States often faced domestic opposition to the mobilization of core funding, whereas pooled funds could allow States to demonstrate to their constituents that development initiatives were effective. While also welcoming the Secretary-General's proposal to utilize the Joint Policy Fund and the Peacebuilding Fund, he wished to hear further details on how those funds, and the discretionary integration fund for the resident coordinators, would be coordinated on the ground.

92. **Mr. Morales López** (Colombia) said that a detailed discussion of the Secretary-General's proposals was timely, as it would help to identify ways of improving the development system so that it was better positioned to implement the 2030 Agenda. The time had come for the system to adapt and respond to the new demands arising from the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other important instruments. Given the persistence of inequality in both developed and developing countries, improvements were clearly needed, particularly in areas such as youth employment and gender equality.

93. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General on the need to ensure a more responsive and tailored country team configuration. There must be a recognition that a "one-size-fits-all" approach did not contribute effectively to national development strategies. The review of the regional economic commissions should similarly reflect the particular circumstances of each region. For its part, Colombia appreciated the role of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as a strategic partner in regional sustainable development efforts, and also recognized the importance of UNDAFs in helping States to implement the 2030 Agenda.

94. A reinvigorated resident coordinator system must promote cross-agency collaboration to optimize resources, increase effectiveness and avoid duplication. The Joint Policy Fund and the Peacebuilding Fund had been critical to peacebuilding and sustainable development efforts in Colombia and were tangible examples of how the United Nations, through better

coordination among its agencies and programmes and with the support of Member States, could improve conditions for thousands of people.

95. **Mr. Hoshino** (Japan) said that while his country strongly supported the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, questions remained about the extent and cost of the reforms proposed. His delegation therefore welcomed the explanations provided to date by the Secretariat in that regard.

96. The Secretary-General's latest report on repositioning the United Nations development system (A/72/684-E/2018/7) contained commitments to enhance accountability and transparency through the funding compact, thereby incentivizing contributions from donors. Japan looked forward to further such commitments to improve efficiency and effectiveness, in line with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 71/243. In that regard, he wished to commend UNICEF for the successful review of its business processes: the resulting improvements in efficiency had directly benefited developing countries. He also welcomed the proposal to establish common back offices. Translating such ideas into bolder and more specific commitments would encourage contributions from donors.

97. The United Nations would not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals alone or in isolation. The Organization must therefore strengthen partnerships with other actors, make the most of its comparative advantages and adapt the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to the specific context of each country.

98. **Mr. Paolino Laborde** (Uruguay) said that it was important to adopt measures at all levels to enable the United Nations development system to better promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The system must be able to provide support to developing countries in a comprehensive manner that respected national development plans and strategies and was in line with General Assembly resolution 71/243. The primary objective of the 2030 Agenda — the eradication of poverty — could not be achieved unless more stable, predictable and sustainable funding was made available for the operational activities of the development system. Financing should be provided in line with national development priorities and strategies in order to address the specific situation of each State.

99. His delegation welcomed the references to South-South cooperation as a means of promoting development in the Secretary-General's reports on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. However, South-South cooperation should complement, not replace, North-South cooperation, which remained the most important means of mobilizing the resources necessary for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that connection, developed countries should make a meaningful effort to meet and increase their ODA commitments.

100. The primary function of the resident coordinator should be in-country coordination of United Nations operational activities for development, in collaboration with the country team and with the guidance of the relevant Government. There should be balanced geographical representation and gender parity among the staff of resident coordinator offices, and staffing should be carried out in coordination with the host country.

101. Collaboration and synergies among agencies should be enhanced, and they should not compete with one another. Furthermore, resources should be efficiently allocated and used. In that connection, it was important to take into account lessons learned from the "Delivering as one" pilot and best practices from countries that had chosen to adopt other systems. The specific needs of each country should be determined without reference to their per capita incomes.

102. The universality, scope and cross-cutting nature of the 2030 Agenda called for coordination, solidarity and innovative efforts in order to mobilize the additional financial resources required to achieve its ambitious objectives.

103. **Mr. Larhmaid** (Morocco) said that the Secretariat and Member States should work together to strengthen the resident coordinator system and country teams while addressing budgetary constraints. The proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/684-E/2018/7) would help development agencies to better align their activities with the national development policies of States.

104. As poverty eradication was the overarching objective of the Sustainable Development Goals, it must be central to the activities of the United Nations development system. That was especially true in developing countries, particularly in Africa. For that reason, African priorities must be taken into account in the reform process. Morocco also supported efforts to assess and improve capacity-building within the United Nations development system in support of South-South and triangular cooperation.

105. The proposals to enhance coordination and coherence among United Nations agencies in the field must be implemented in harmony with the development models adopted by Member States. Improvements to the

resident coordinator system based on a new generation of country teams could only succeed in the context of national ownership of operational activities for development. UNDAFs must be the sole instrument guiding cooperation between the United Nations development system and States.

106. The proposals to reform accountability and control structures at the United Nations agency level, including proposals related to the revitalization of the Council, deserved special attention to ensure that each institution's mandate was fulfilled. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's vision for a predictable and flexible financing strategy that took the needs of developing countries into account.

107. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that the United Nations development system should prioritize the eradication of poverty in all its forms and assist developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda in a manner consonant with their national priorities and strategies. The repositioning of the system should ensure that national ownership and leadership were maintained and that programme countries received expert assistance in leveraging resources.

108. It was important for entities of the United Nations development system and resident coordinators to bear in mind that coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts should be enhanced only in specific situations, namely where countries faced humanitarian emergencies or conflict or post-conflict situations. Member States should therefore not be asked to support a blanket mandate for the nexus approach; rather, such approval should be sought on a case-by-case basis.

109. To meet their specific needs and priorities, Governments should have the prerogative to decide on the configuration and presence of United Nations country teams. In addition, United Nations development system entities and resident coordinators should be funded through enhanced core resources and loosely earmarked non-core resources; partnerships with the private sector should be explored through an intergovernmental process; and the system-wide strategic document (A/72/684-E/2018/7, annex) should similarly be intergovernmentally agreed. Lastly, the proposed repositioning of the United Nations development system should lead to increased funding for the 2030 Agenda and should not increase burdens on developing countries.

110. **Mr. Lamberti** (Italy) said that effective system-wide action among the various agencies operating in a given country required a strengthened, impartial and independent resident coordinator system and country teams aligned around a common UNDAF. Those enhancements should facilitate the multi-partner and multi-stakeholder partnerships that were crucial for sustainable development. System-wide coherence would also be served by integrated and effective participation from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions.

111. As a donor country that favoured multilateral and core financial contributions in its aid financing decisions, Italy agreed that the current funding patterns of the United Nations development system needed reform. It encouraged increased cooperation among United Nations development system institutions and improved integration and coordination in the activities of their executive boards.

112. The only way to enhance the credibility of the development system and to attract funding was through increased transparency and accountability. The Secretary-General's reports on repositioning the United Nations development system provided a solid foundation for discussions of those issues.

113. **Ms. Barandua** (Observer for Switzerland) said that the 2030 Agenda required genuine changes to the working methods of the United Nations. Greater emphasis must be placed on collective results and more accountability at the country, regional and headquarters levels. In addition, the United Nations must improve coherence among various development actors and adapt current methods for financing development activities.

114. Her delegation wished to make several observations regarding the ambitious proposals contained in the Secretary-General's latest report (A/72/684-E/2018/7). Reinvigorating the role of the resident coordinators was essential. The proposals in the report satisfied the minimum needed for resident coordinators and United Nations agencies to work more effectively. Switzerland supported the use of assessed contributions to fund the resident coordinator system, as it was reasonable for all Member States to pay a proportionate share of the costs; however, in order to ensure predictable and sustainable funding, assessed contributions should perhaps be combined with other sources of funding.

115. The system-wide strategic document (A/72/684-E/2018/7, annex) was an important step toward clarifying the aims of the United Nations development system in the light of the 2030 Agenda, although further elaboration was still required.

116. The proposed funding compact would address the need for changes to the way development activities were funded. Funding must be appropriate and used

effectively, and joint accountability mechanisms must be strengthened. Contributions to pooled funds should be encouraged, not only by the United Nations system but also by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

117. **Ms. Nguyen** Phuong Nga (Viet Nam) said that General Assembly resolution 71/243 was the key document to guide the repositioning of the United Nations development system. The repositioning process should focus on the eradication of poverty in all its forms while maintaining respect for State ownership of sustainable development strategies. National priorities and development levels should also be taken into account.

118. The new generation of United Nations country teams must work closely with host Governments in formulating and implementing UNDAFs and any other United Nations planning instruments. In that spirit, the Government of Viet Nam and the United Nations country team had jointly developed "One Strategic Plan 2017-2021", which was based on the principles of inclusion, equity and sustainability and was aligned with the country's socioeconomic development strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the "Green One United Nations House" in Viet Nam had led to positive changes in the country team's working methods. Shared business services and back-office functions had helped to reduce costs, and the co-location of agencies had enhanced coherence and efficiency within the country team.

119. The decrease in core resources had undermined the credibility of the development system. Contributions to inter-agency pooled funds, such as the Joint Policy Fund, were therefore essential for United Nations joint activities and programmes. As provided for in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, countries should honour their ODA commitments.

120. **Mr. Montilla** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) said that a strengthened United Nations development system must support national efforts to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions, as that was critical for the achievement of sustainable development. In that context, the specific challenges faced by each country in adopting policies aligned with the 2030 Agenda should be taken into consideration. He welcomed a United Nations presence that was more robust yet respectful of the right of each State to chart its own course. The new vision for the resident coordinator system must provide flexibility and avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

121. While welcoming the proposal for a funding compact to ensure flexible and predictable access to resources, he hoped that proposed budget increases would not impose financial burdens on developing countries, particularly the least developed among them. As a developing island State in the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic was exposed to repeated natural disasters that had erased years of economic progress, increased its national debt and forced the country to divert funds from social programmes to reconstruction efforts.

122. His delegation commended the work done by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to support national and regional development activities. All regional economic commissions should be strengthened, and their scope and assistance to Member States should not be reduced. The commissions provided a space for the design of strategies that incorporated regional dimensions.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.